

## **Evangelistic Sermons**

(Doctrinal Series)

by

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### **CHAPTER NINE -**

### **CONFESSING CHRIST**

**"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."** (Romans 10:9).

I saw a little book the other day written by Benjamin Franklin. I don't know which Ben it was, but it wasn't the one who coaxed the lightning down his kite string and put us wise to electricity. When I went off to the Spanish-American war Martin Luther filled my pulpit while I was gone, but it wasn't the one who nailed the 95 theses on the door of the Wittenburg cathedral.

I'm not recommending the contents of the book because I didn't read it. It was the title that caught my eye. It was called, "*Sincerity Seeking the Way to Heaven*," and it started out by introducing a young man of twenty-one who is making his first effort to seek the Lord and he says to himself, "I am astonished at myself that I have lived this long without GOD and without hope."

This is really one of the most astonishing things of life and this town is full of people just as every other town is, who have waited not only until you are twenty-one, but twice that long and some of you have passed this matter up until your hairs are gray and your bones are brittle and your feeble heart will only pump a few more ounces of blood and the undertaker will come along with the embalming fluid.

And do you know that whether you think about life in this world or in the world to come, the greatest question you'll ever put to yourself or anybody else, the greatest business you'll ever be called upon to transact is, and the greatest concern of your soul ought to be, "How can I with all my sin and all the indecencies of my life be justified in the sight of GOD and be saved from eternal death and hell."

You are concerned about a hundred other things but you'd better be concerned about this one most important thing of all. And you'd better neglect anything else than to neglect the salvation of your soul. Better neglect your business, better neglect your lodge, better neglect your family, better neglect your health, better neglect anything than to neglect the way of getting right with GOD if there is any way to get right.

And there is a way. GOD has given it to us. It's His own prescription. It's His own remedy for

our disease. I want to ask you to take it tonight. Of course, if you don't take it, you've only got your own fool self to blame for the consequences.

No wonder some of you are so far away from GOD. You've been taking all kinds of dope. You've been taking Christian Science and you've never gotten anywhere. And you've dosed yourself with Spiritualism and Theosophy and Unitarianism and the Lord only knows what all. But these are all the Devil's medicine and no wonder you're in such a miserable plight.

You're like the man who took Peruna. You know a lot of these patent medicines are about two thirds alcohol anyhow. This man had a bad case of worms and Dr. Hartman, the Peruna man, recommended his patent medicine to him, and after a while he asked the man for a testimonial and the fellow wrote him and said, "Dr Hartman, Dear Sir - I have taken twenty bottles of Peruna and I can truthfully say that I have no more worms, but I've got snakes"

You'll never get any better by swallowing the Devil's medicine. But if you want health of soul and the salvation that GOD has worked out for you, let's see what GOD says we must do to get it.

He says, "**If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.**" "**If thou shalt confess with thy mouth and believe in thine heart.**"

Of course belief always comes before confession, but Paul puts it in this way to be in harmony with the previous verse, but in the following verse he puts them in their right order, where he says, "**For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.**" A confession with the mouth that does not have its root in a believing heart is just so much hot air. Its a mockery and of course its an insult to GOD.

It says, "**If thou shalt believe in thine heart.**" There's a difference between heart belief and head belief. A man once said, "It don't make much difference about a man's life; if he believes on JESUS CHRIST, GOD will save him." But he was confounding opinion with faith.

And if theology has been guilty of any one crime. I'm afraid it's been this. A belief in the heart always manifests itself in two ways.

#### 1. By an absolute trust in the object of its faith.

You can believe all you want to about JESUS CHRIST and go to hell with your head full of belief like that. It's believing on Him in your heart that saves you because it's that kind of belief that leads you to trust Him and commit yourself to him in order to be saved.

Alexander the Great had a favorite doctor who went with him in all the battles and some one who was jealous of him and wanted to get him out of the way wrote Alexander a letter saying that his doctor was going to put poison in his cup the next morning. He thought the great General would order him put to death at once, but instead of that the next morning when they were all together Alexander read the letter before them and before the doctor could reply he seized the cup and drained it before their eyes to show his friend, the doctor, that he believed on him with

all his heart and was ready to trust his life in his hands.

2. The other way that a belief in the heart manifests itself is in the life. The fellow who believes in his heart and then confesses with his mouth is the fellow who delivers the goods. The fellow who believes in his head and confesses with his mouth is the fellow JESUS was talking to when He said, "**Why call ye me Lord, Lord and do not the things that I say?**" A man can believe in his head and you'll never know it unless he tells you with his mouth, but when a man believes in his heart his life will speak louder than any words can sound.

Your children may think mighty well of you as their father. They might go and write up a nice creed about you, and your wisdom and your generosity and your great regard for their welfare. They could put it down in black and white, "We, the children of Mr. So and So, do believe and hereby declare thus and thus about our father . . . But if they left you severely alone, never cared when you went away, never seemed glad to see you come back, never thanked you for your goodness and never begged your forgiveness when they hurt you, you'd say, "Bright children, those, but they are heartless:

**"If thou shalt believe in thine heart."** Believe what? **"That God hath raised Him from the dead"**; raised JESUS up out of the grave. You see, Paul picks out the very heart of the Gospel, the fundamental thing of the whole business. It's the keystone of the Christian faith; you knock that out and the whole arch will come down with a crash. No wonder the old Devil has been doing his worst for twenty centuries to put a black eye on this doctrine. He'd put a crimp in the preacher's business alright, for **"If Christ be not risen from the dead,"** says Paul, **"then our preaching is vain and your faith is in vain."**

Everywhere the apostles went they preached the resurrection of JESUS from the dead. If you had gone up to them and said, "How do you know that JESUS is the Son of GOD? How do you know that He has power to forgive sins? How do you know that death is not the end of life? and how do you know that the gift of GOD is eternal life through JESUS CHRIST, whom you preach?" they would have said, **"Because God raised Him from the dead."**

I haven't time to go into this subject now, but when JESUS made His claims He said He would prove them by rising from the dead, and GOD raised Him up. And so Paul says, in Romans 1:4 that CHRIST was **"declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead."** So in His resurrection GOD recognized Him as His own Son and as the Saviour of the world and accepted of His blood as a sacrifice for your sins and mine. And that's why, because of who He is and what He has done, if you believe in your heart and trust yourself to Him you shall be saved.

There's no other way. A lot of people think it can be done by morality and culture and respectability, but that's all in their imagination. You're like the old Spaniard, Ponce de Leon, who hunted around down among the Florida Everglades and thought he was going to find a fountain that would give him perpetual youth when he drank the waters. The wrinkles were to smooth, the gray hair to become black and the bent shoulders to straighten up. But did he find it? No. Why? Because it was only the hallucination of a deluded imagination. It was only in his mind.

And some of you poor deluded unbelievers imagine you are going to find salvation for your soul in paying your debts and being decent and keeping out of jail, but you can just search for it till you are gray haired and wrinkled and you'll never find it. There is just one way to be saved; and I've told you what it is.

And now when a man believes, it's time to make his confession. Paul says, "**If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus.**" And when a man believes, really believes in his heart, you're not going to have any trouble getting out of him a confession with his mouth or any other way that GOD asks him to make it?

The Bible puts confession right along side of belief. GOD makes one fully as important as the other. GOD expects a man to stand up for his belief. GOD expects a man to stand up for JESUS CHRIST if he believes in Him. JESUS CHRIST said, "**Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess before my Father which is in Heaven.**" I'm glad he expects it. A lot of you people here believe enough with your head; it's time now for you to believe with your heart and step out and make your public confession. I say I'm glad CHRIST demands the public acknowledgement.

If a man's a loyal American he won't be ashamed to take off his hat and cover his heart in the presence of the Stars and Stripes. If a man's a loyal Englishman or a loyal German he won't be ashamed to acknowledge his king or his emperor, and these things he must do if he wants to be a citizen of these kingdoms, and if a man wants to be a citizen in the kingdom of GOD why shouldn't he be expected to stand up and acknowledge the KING of Kings and the Lord of the universe.

No matter what political party you're a member of, you'll go to a rally and yell yourself black in the face to let people know it. If you are a member of nothing more than a little two by four literary society you'll put on a pin and parade it before other people and say, "See what I belong to," and yet when it comes to being a member of the glorious body of CHRIST and acknowledging allegiance to the noblest character this old universe has ever seen you show the yellow streak in you and drop your eyes and look for your hat and try to sneak out.

I'm glad CHRIST says you've got to confess Him before men. I wouldn't give two whoops on this side of anywhere for a fellow who won't stand up for what he believes and won't shout for it too. I like to think of that enthusiastic Irishman who was incessantly shouting for his own country: Hurrah for Ireland! Hurrah for Ireland! Hurrah for Ireland! And one day when there was a bunch of them together and something was said that started Pat and he shouted, Hurrah for Ireland! Hurrah for Ireland!", there was an Englishman there who had stood it about as long as he could, and when Pat broke out this time the Englishman in disgust said, "Oh, hurrah for hell!"

"That's right" said Pat, "Ivery mon for his own country."

I like to see a fellow stand up for what he believes. And now, how does CHRIST expect a man to confess Him?

1. Well, in the first place, of course, by your life. That goes without saying. It's the handful of hypocrites in the church that throws the whole crowd under suspicion. It would be a good deal

better for the cause of CHRIST, and for some of you, too, if you didn't make any confession at all as long as you don't back it up with a decent life. If what you are speaks so loud people can't hear what you say, then shut off the hot air and give GOD a chance at your hypocritical old heart and maybe He can do something yet for you before hell gets hold of you. You know I think if hell took a dose of ipecac the last piece to be thrown up would be the snake hearted old hypocrite who loafes around on GOD's territory and is serving the Devil with the livery of Heaven on.

2. And then of course you are expected to confess CHRIST in baptism.

"Well," you say, "doesn't the Bible say, '**Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved,**' and there's nothing said there about baptism?"

Yes, but it says in another place, "**Repent and be baptized,**" and there's nothing said there about believing. You've got to take all the teaching of the Bible.

"Well," you say, "Do you have to be baptized in order to be saved?"

Well, the answer is "no," but if you won't - you probably aren't. If GOD tells you to do a thing and you say, "I won't do it," why that's a good sign you're not a Christian at all, or you'd do what GOD tells you to do. But don't get an idea that baptism saves you. It's a symbol of a spiritual operation and it's a sign of your obedience to the word of GOD.

3. And then of course you are expected to confess CHRIST by joining the church. You say, "Can't I be a Christian and not join the church?" Well, I don't know; I wouldn't advise you to try it. Somebody has said you can go to Europe without going on a ship, but look out for the sharks," And look out for the submarines too!

"Well," you say, "I've never found any church that just suits me," I suppose if some one would start another denomination to your taste, you'd join, and yet you howl because we've got so many now, What's the difference whether your little ideas are incorporated or not? About nine out of every ten of these denominational differences don't amount to anything anyhow, Join any Gospel preaching church and you'll be a whole lot better off than where you are now. The church is the only institution that CHRIST ever founded and if you're a Christian and got any regard for CHRIST you'll get in it and fight in the ranks with the rest of us.

4. But Paul says, "**If thou shalt confess with thy mouth,**" He doesn't say, "If you are baptized and join the church you'll be saved," and we know well enough that hundreds of people, yes, thousands, do this and are really not saved at all. But he does say, "If you confess with your mouth, and believe of course in your heart you shall be saved." He takes it for granted, of course, that you'll do these other things, but to think the doing of these things settles the matter he wants us to know is a sad and fatal delusion.

CHRIST expects you to speak up for Him and not be ashamed, I know it's not the easiest thing to do. I know an old soldier who had fought hard battles in the face of musketry and cannon, but who fought six long months before he could get the courage to walk out and make a public confession of CHRIST. A lot of you church people haven't got the grit and the grace to do it yourself, and no wonder when you get in a crowd and someone jeers at JESUS CHRIST, you

never peep; and when someone told a smutty story you didn't have the Christian manhood or the Christian womanhood to protest, but sat there like a miserable old turn coat and looked sheepish, Well, you may look like a sheep, but you act like a goat. And when you come in here and when you are asked to walk out here and publicly declare yourself for the sake of your influence you grab your hat and sneak out and beat it.

Now why does GOD demand that you make a public confession of your faith? He does it for three reasons.

1. For your own sake. It'll strengthen your faith and give you a little spiritual nerve. A lot of you people want to be Christians. At least you think you do. You say you do. But you've got a prejudice against coming out in public. But it's the only way. JESUS CHRIST hung on the cross in public for you and I rather guess you can well afford to stand up in public for Him.

There's one thing you can bank on and that is if you have made up your mind you won't do it, that is just the thing you will have to do if you ever find peace and any salvation for your soul.

But if you only knew what it would mean for you to come, of the satisfaction it would bring you and the respect you would have for yourself, and the nerve it would give you and the spiritual tonic it would be, you wouldn't waste a minute in getting here.

I remember in Oil City, Pa., once a fine looking business man came down the aisle and when I took his hand, he said, "Biederwolf, I've had a very unsatisfactory time." I said, "What's the matter?" He said. "I joined church two weeks ago, and I've been miserable ever since." "Well," I said, "that's a queer fix to get into for joining church; what's the matter?"

"Well," he said, "I declared I never would walk down this aisle; I didn't see the necessity of it, and it was a bit too public for me and I said I wouldn't do it; but I said, 'I'll be a Christian and I'll join the church,' and I joined it two weeks ago, and I've been just miserable; I felt like a little coward. and I couldn't seem to get anywhere, but thank GOD," he said, "I've walked this aisle tonight, and say, Biederwolf, it does make a difference." Of course it does.

2. He demands it in the second place for the sake of others. Do you know that when the Chief Justice of the Court of Appeals of the state of New York walked down the aisle in Rochester when Finney was preaching in the thirties it was a signal for a break in the ranks and every lawyer in the city before many nights had done the same thing, and that was the beginning of that great revival which swept 150,000 souls into the kingdom and whose influence has been felt all down the decades to our own time.

You may not have an influence like that, but some one is watching you, and your example is worth more than you estimate; and I say to you, man of profession, man of business, factory superintendent and all men, the young men of this city have a right to expect you to lead out in this matter and the young maidens have the same right in respect to you, my sister, and it's worth everything to you to stop and consider whether you are going to meet now the obligation that rests upon you or whether you are going to meet one day at the bar of GOD the responsibility for not doing it.

3. Then in the third place he demands it for CHRIST's sake. And this is the biggest reason of all.

When the inexorable justice of GOD demanded that you should die, and there was no hope for you and hell stared you in the face, JESUS stepped in and took the blow for you, and yet some of you haven't got the manhood to walk down here and acknowledge Him and you'd like to sneak into the Kingdom of GOD when so many people wouldn't know it.

I read of a working man who saw a building contractor fall from a high scaffold and he reached up his arms to catch him. The weight of the falling man drove his arms into their sockets, crushed his shoulders, twisted his spine and made him walk the streets forever after an object of pity; and one day some one asked him what had become of the man he had saved.

And his face lit up with joy and he said, "Oh, he gave me half of his fortune; he gives me half of his income and never lets me want for a thing." Ah, men, we know how to appreciate that. But some of you seem to forget that there was One who was crushed and bent for you, who was wounded for your transgressions and bruised for your iniquities, and yet you haven't got the manhood to step out in public and acknowledge Him as your Saviour. You treat Him worse than a brute, some of you. GOD pity you!

You ought to confess Him. You ought to acknowledge him. You ought to thank GOD for the opportunity of standing up for JESUS CHRIST. Don't be cowardly. GOD despises a coward, and He's calling on you tonight - now - to show what kind of material you've got in you. If you stand for Him here He'll stand for you in the judgment. But if you don't, there's no hope for you. CHRIST says, "**Whosoever shall confess Me before men, him will I confess before my Father who is in Heaven,**" but He says, "**And whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father who is in Heaven.**"

My! but what an hour of triumph that will be for the redeemed of GOD. The old Devil will be there to accuse us but we will have One to stand for us there because we stood for Him here.

I sat at dinner one day in the City Club of Rochester with Dr. Alberston, and he told me the story of the dream of Daniel Curry. Daniel Curry was a mighty man of GOD in the middle west. In his dream he ascended after death and knocked at the gate of Heaven. He was asked for his name and then told it could not be found, but that if he wished he might appear before the judgment seat and answer for himself.

He then found himself being carried rapidly away until he came into the presence of a mighty, shining light into the very midst of which he was ushered. It was a million times brighter than any thing he had ever seen on earth and its dazzling effulgence seemed to blind him.

He could see nothing but the light, but directly out of the midst of it there came a voice, saying, "Daniel Curry, have you always been good?" Alas, no; he had not. "Have you always been pure?" He knew that he had not been. "Have you always been charitable in your opinion of others?" He could not say that he had been. "Have you always been fair and precisely just in your dealings with your fellow men?"

And some things he had forgotten came back to his memory, and he stood there condemned by his own testimony.

And as he waited thinking that the end would come any second, he heard a voice, a voice sweeter than the voice of any mother. And as he turned he saw one standing by his side with a face sweeter than any face he had ever seen on earth, and that voice of unspeakable sweetness said, "Father, all this man's sin, all his mistakes, every evil action, word and thought; all of his short-comings, put them all down against me; Daniel Curry stood for me down on the earth; I'll stand for him up here."

Will you stand for Him? Then do it now. All Heaven is urging you on; all hell is trying to hold you back. GOD help you to make no mistake.

~ end of chapter 9 ~

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