CONFESSING CHRIST

> "Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 10:32-33).
>
> "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Romans 1:16).

When we think of all that our Saviour has done for us, how can we be ashamed of Him? The hymnwriter said it this way:

> "Ashamed of Jesus! sooner far
> Let evening blush to own a star;
> He sheds the beams of light divine
> O'er this benighted soul of mine."
>
> "Ashamed of Jesus! That dear Friend
> On Whom my hopes of heaven depend!
> No; when I blush, be this my shame,
> That I no more revere His Name."
>
> "Ashamed of Jesus! Yes, I may,
> When I've no guilt to wash away;
> No tear to wipe, no good to crave,
> No fears to quell, no soul to save."
>
> – Joseph Grigg

The grateful believer should gladly confess and acknowledge that the Lord Jesus Christ has saved his soul and made him whole. He should freely admit that he belongs to the Son of God who loved him and gave Himself for him (compare Gal. 2:20).

The word "confess" comes from the Greek word homologeo which is made up of two parts:

homo=same logeo =to speak

Thus it means "to speak the same thing, to agree, to say the same thing as another, to agree with another person." The believer in Christ is to confess the Lord Jesus with his mouth (Rom. 10:9-10) and thus he is to vocally and publically agree with what God has said concerning His Son (compare 1 John 5:9-12).

God has said, "This is My beloved Son" (Matt. 17:5) and the person who confesses Christ is in agreement with that statement: "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God" (1 John 4:15). God the Son came into the world and took upon

Himself human flesh (John 1:14) so that He could die for sinful men (1 Tim. 1:15), and the one who confesses Christ is in agreement with this stupendous fact: "Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God" (1 John 4:2-3).

To confess that Jesus is the Christ means that a person agrees that Jesus is indeed the Messiah (John 1:41; 4;25-26,42). According to the Old Testament, the Messiah was portrayed as...

1. ...the God–Man (Isaiah 7:14)
2. ...the mighty God (Isaiah 9:6)
3. ...the sinner's Substitute (Isaiah Chapter 53)
4. ...the eternal King (Micah 5:2)
5. ...the LORD (Jehovah) our righteousness (Jer. 23:5-6).

There was a cost involved in confessing that Jesus is the Messiah: "for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that He was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue" (John 9:22). Because of this cost many failed to openly confess Him: "... because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue" (John 12:42).

The word that means the opposite of the word "confess" is the word "deny" (see John 1:20; 1 John 2:22-23). To confess is to say, "YES"; to deny is to say "NO." In Luke 22:57-60 Peter should have said, "YES, I know Him!" (v.57); "YES, I am one of them!" (v.58). "YES, I was with Him!" (verses 50-60). But Peter denied Christ and refused to acknowledge a relationship with Him.

When asked, "Do you own Jesus as your Saviour and Lord?" the believer can boldly respond, "YES, I do. I acknowledge that He is mine. I belong to the Son of God Who loved me and gave Himself for me!" Don't be afraid to publically claim Him as your own. During the great Christian persecutions of the second and third centuries, those believers who would not deny the Lord, even at the risk of great suffering and torture and martyrdom, were known as confessors. May we never be ashamed of the God who was unashamed to die for us (2 Tim. 1:8; Rom. 1:16; 1 Pet. 4:16)!

"Let the redeemed of the LORD say so" (Psalm 107:2). How can we who have been redeemed not proudly speak of our Redeemer? He is not ashamed to call us His brethren (Heb. 2:11). May we not be ashamed to call Him our God and Saviour. If we confess Him before men, He will confess us before His Father in heaven (Matthew 10:32). As I enjoy a saving relationship to Christ I am able to say to others: "I want you to know that Jesus Christ belongs to me. He is my Saviour." My Saviour in turn will say to the Father, "This person belongs to Me. He's Mine!" On the contrary, if we deny Christ before men, He will deny us before the Father. "This person does not belong to me. I never knew him." How tragic!

According to Luke 12:8, if we gladly own Christ before men, Christ will gladly own us before the angels of God. But if we deny Him before men (verse 9), He will deny us before the host of heaven. Notice Christ's promise to the overcomer: "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess

his name before my Father, and before his angels" (Rev. 3:5). The person who truly believes on Christ "shall not be ashamed" (Rom. 10:11).

Have you publically confessed Christ and acknowledged that He is your Lord and Saviour? Have you shared this with your friends and loved ones? Do they know that you are a believer in Christ? What about the people that you work with or go to school with? Do they know about your relationship to Christ and what He means to you? Have you ever confessed Christ in the services of a Bible believing, Christ honoring church? This can be done at the Pastor's invitation or at a time when prayer requests are given or at a time when testimonies are given. A very clear and concise confession of faith should also be given at the time of one's baptism.

"We must not be ashamed to let all men see that we believe in Christ and serve Christ and love Christ and care more for the praise of Christ than for the praise of man. The duty of confessing Christ is incumbent on all Christians in every age of the church. Let us never forget that. It is not for martyrs only, but for all believers in every rank of life. It is not for great occasions only, but for our daily walk through an evil world. The rich man among the rich, the labourer among labourers, the young among the young, the servant among servants – each and all must be prepared, if they are true Christians, to confess their Master. It needs no blowing a trumpet. It requires no noisy boasting. It needs nothing more than using the daily opportunity. But one thing is certain – if a man loves Jesus, he ought not to be ashamed to let people know it...Whether we like it or not, whether it be hard or easy, our course is perfectly clear. In one way or another Christ must be confessed." (J.C.Ryle, Expository Thoughts on the Gospels)

Confessing Christ is like putting a label on a can. The label on a can gladly confesses its contents (whether it is peas or beans or corn or some kind of soup). The believer can "put a label on the can" by acknowledging who dwells within: "Christ lives in me. He's the One who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Gal. 2:20).

Finally, the confession of our mouth must agree with the conduct of our life. In Titus 1:16 Paul describes a group of people who profess (confess) that they know God. But do they really know Him? Their lips say, "Yes, we know God!" But their life says, "No, we don't know God." Their walk is in conflict with their talk and this is an abomination to the Lord. These people name the name of Christ but they do not depart from iniquity, thus giving evidence that they do not really belong to God (2 Tim. 2:19). Though they claim to know God, they are liars and the truth is not in them (1 John 2:3-4). As believers in Christ, may we like Timothy confess a good confession before all men (1 Tim. 6:12). May the world see that the Christ we name with our lips is the God we serve with our lives! May we not be ashamed of the gospel and may we not be a shame to the gospel.