

# The Joy of the Lord and Confession of Sin - Psalm 32:3-5, 1 John 1:9

## The Treasure that is Your Life in Christ #8

**Introduction** – Recall that this series began with the story of the man who found a treasure hidden in a field “...and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field” (Matt 13:44). To find life in Jesus Christ is to find joy. Jesus said He had spoken the things He had “...that My joy may remain in you and that your joy may be full” (John 15:11). Then why is joy so elusive? Heb 12:1 tells us to “lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us.” Confession of sin restores us in the joy of our treasure, our salvation in Christ (*many thanks to Jim Wilson and Douglas Wilson for their instructions in this and much of this material*).

**The Distractions** – Many people think they have lost their joy for reasons that are simply not in accord with Scripture. They think they have lost their joy because of trials and temptations. But the Scripture tells us to “count it all joy when you fall into various trials” (James 1:2). Some say that they cannot walk in joy because of how others have treated them. But Jesus tells us to “rejoice and be exceedingly glad” when we are reviled or persecuted (Matt 5:10-12). Some say that circumstance, such as the loss of a loved one, has stolen their joy. But the Scripture says, “Do not sorrow as others who have no hope” (1 Thess 4:13). And so these are all distractions from the real reason that one has lost his joy.

**The Heavy Hand of God** (Psalm 32:3-5) – David describes his bones as having wasted through groaning all day when he kept silent. God’s hand was heavy upon him because of unconfessed sin (missing the mark), transgressions (rebellion), and iniquities (a perversion or twisting, as of the image of God in us). His joy was gone. He needed to open his mouth, to “acknowledge” these sins. But everyone practicing evil hates to do this (John 3:20). Joy only comes when we are walking in the light.

**Confession** (1 John 1:9) – Acknowledging sins is confession. To confess your sins is to “say the same thing” (*homolegeo*) about them that God does. It is to tag them as God tags them. What God is asking of you is basic honesty and no spin. And then the promise is that God will clean you up. Notice that you are not the one doing the cleaning; God is. You are just agreeing with Him that there is dirt to clean up. And for too many of us, there is quite a bit of decluttering that needs to take place in our spiritual home.

**If You Lack Joy** – Therefore, if you have lost the joy of the Lord, and you are a Christian, it is because you are under the discipline of the Lord (Heb 12:7, 11). If you want to have the joy of the Lord, if you do not want a lackluster Christian life, here is what it takes: simple, straightforward honesty. Turn to the Lord and get honest with God. You must confess your sin as though you were the only one that had ever sinned; it is first of all only between you and God (Psalm 51:1-4). That honesty with God will in turn lead you to confess your sins to others when necessary, to make restitution when necessary, and to reveal additional layers of sin that also need to be confessed. And when you honestly confess your sins to others it is never with the expectation or requirement that they must now confess their sins to you.

**Shifts and Evasions** – Here is how we seek to avoid confession. Real, honest confession, that is.

1 – *You justify it* – you mutter to yourself, “I really was right...I really was justified to do that...”

2 – *You excuse it* – “it was wrong, BUT...”

3 – *You hide it* – just like our first parents in the Garden. Doesn’t work.

4 – *Pass the buck* – “It was the woman You gave me...”

5 – *You put it off* – “yes, I really need to confess this, I’ll do it tonight...I’ll sleep on it...”

6 – *You use vague terms* – “I have generally sinned...theologically, I am a sinner...it was an affair...”

7 – *Rename it* – “it was a mistake, an error in judgment, and I am only human...”

8 – *There are too many* – “I don’t know where to start.” Let the Holy Spirit tell you, “start with this one.”

9 – *I can’t remember them all* – well, just start with the ones you do remember.

10 – *Nobody’s perfect* – acknowledge your specific imperfections, your specific sins.

11 – *I’m going to do it again anyway* – confession will put you in better shape next time the temptation comes.

12 – *It will cost too much* – some sins require restitution and you might lose your job, reputation. But “*what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his soul.*”

13 – *Bitterness* – this is the great optical illusion. You are thinking about the other person’s sin and think that is why you have lost your joy. But it is actually your bitterness that needs to be confessed.

14 – *Morbid introspection* – this is just inverted pride looking at oneself instead of to the Lord. Confess it.

15 – *Everyone does it* – other Christians cuss, watch sleazy movies, get drunk. Yes, and you will notice that they do not have the joy of the Lord either.

**I Want the Joy** (Psalm 51:10-12) – Having confessed your sins honestly, we are invited to plead with God to restore to us the joy of our salvation and to have a steadfast spirit in us. That joy of the Lord will be your strength.

Every home has lots to clean up. Every Christian has to confess sin. What is set before you is this – joy or misery – enjoyment of the treasure or disdain, apathy and eventually hatred of it.