

Prayer of Confession

("Say what you need to say")

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Intro.

A young monk said to his teacher, "I fell. What should I do?" The elder answered "Get up." The monk said, "I got up and fell again!" the elder replied, "Get up again!" But the young monk asked. "For how long should I get up when I fall?" "Until your death" answered the old monk.

(Slide 1) This saying illustrates the nature of our lives, as we sin, confess, and repent. We all need to get up when we fall but in order to get up, one needs to recognize that they are on the ground.

This week during our prayer journey we will be practicing the prayer of confession. It will allow us to be aware of our human brokenness and sinful condition, but at the same time, it will open the door for renewal and transformation.

Bible context.

In today's gospel reading Luke first clarifies the parable addressees: "some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and regarded others with contempt" – inviting us to know more about the characters and the narrative.

(Slide 2) Contrast is a powerful teaching technique that Jesus used to drive home a significant point. One Bible commentary states that: *In the parable of the pharisee and*

the publican, the genuine humility of the publican is underscored more dramatically as it is alongside the self-righteous arrogance of the proud pharisee.

Theological Reflection. Good News

Let's focus on the prayers; the pharisee is exalting his own work, he needs nothing, he is never wrong, he is morally superior, and looks down on the publican.

Nevertheless, the publican is confessing. He knows that he is broken and needs God's compassion. This person understands his spiritual need, that's why he is confessing his wrongdoings. In order to get up, the publican is declaring that his life is on the ground. However, Jesus said "I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."

This is powerfully good news for all of us today! We all want to be right in God's sight, we all want to come back home justified, we all need God's favor and blessings, and here we have the solution, confession! (Slide 3)When we are honest and transparent with God, the love and compassion of Jesus fixes our hearts and we can receive God's forgiveness. What else could we want? God's favor is at hand when we confess our brokenness! God's mercy endures forever and ever!

Application.

To enjoy this crucial experience of forgiveness, restoration, and renewal, we need to open our hearts and confess our sins; confession is the key to healing us of our guilt.

Here are three essential practices to use as we offer a prayer of confession.

- **Accept your own brokenness and vulnerability.**

It is a great value to be honest with ourselves, to recognize our limits and to be vulnerable in front of God, this is the beginning of our confession.

- **Trust in God's mercy and compassion.**

We know that God is love and his mercy endures forever. I can imagine the publican understood and accepted God's mercy in his life as he confessed his sins and acknowledged his condition.

- **Say it! Confess!**

We can learn a lesson from the pop culture of our time. Songwriter and artist John Meyer expresses this very principle in his song entitled "Say."

*"Take out of your wasted honor,
Every little past frustration.
Take all your so-called problems
Better put them in quotations...
Say what you need to say*

*Walking' like a one-man army
Fighting' with the shadows in your head
Living' up the same old moment
Knowing' you? d be better off instead
If you could only...
Say what you need to say*

*Have no fear for giving in
Have no fear for giving over
You better know that in the end
It's better to say too much
Than to never to say what you need to say again*

*Even if your hands are shaking'
And your faith is broken
Even as the eyes are closing'*

*Do it with a heart wide open
A wide heart*

*Say what you need to say
Say what you need to say...*

Patricia D Brown says the same thing. *"When we confess, we acknowledge our individual and community responsibility for our actions. Confession forces us to examine our own lives and compare how we are living with how we ought to live. In this way, (Slide 4) confession spurs our growth in likeness to Christ under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Confession is our own personal acknowledgment of our failure or wrongdoing."*

Yes! Dear church our God is waiting for many of us who need to comeback. The Lord is always waiting with arms open to receive and forgive. This week as we focus on confession, let us confess our sins and come back to God so that we might enjoy his forgiveness, restoration and renewal! Amen!