

## “From the Ashes” Sermon Series Part 4-“Confession”

Scripture: Joel 2:12-13, James 5:16, Proverbs 28:13, Psalm 32:5, Romans 10:10,  
Luke 15:11-32, 1 John 1:19

**Main Argument:** Confession is the process of recognition of sin, turning from it and experiencing the forgiveness of God. Having a regular practice of searching our lives and coming into the light can cultivate a life full of grace and mercy as we rise from the ashes of past sins and poor decision making in our lives.

(Illustration of stolen silver dollar)

Admitting failure is difficult. Confessing and coming clean when we are at fault is not an easy task. I'm sure many of you here today have a similar story like the one I just shared. Honestly, we probably all have numerous stories that sound eerily similar.

Thankfully, the stories end differently when God gets involved. With God, we are promised forgiveness when we confess our sins and come clean. And when we bring ourselves into the light we are able to live free, unburdened or hindered by the sin that so easily entangles so that we can run the race set before us. (Hebrews 12:1)

Confession is the 4th topic of our 6 weeks together in our journey to abundant life. Obviously Jesus led a sinless life so we won't see any specific examples from His life including sin. However, it is because of Jesus' sinless life and humble sacrifice that we can experience the unrestrained forgiveness of the Father over our sin. As I said in week 1, *you are not broken beyond repair.*

Jesus is the reason we can confess and experience complete forgiveness in our lives.

This divine forgiveness is truly *amazing grace* and it is such a different response to our wrongdoing than what many of us grew up experiencing.

Our teaching today is going to follow the story of an arrogant son and his journey *from the ash heap back to the arms of his father.*

### **We Squander It All**

Luke 15:11-13

This story is where most of our stories begin. We are convinced we know how to run our life better than God does. So, we take all that he has given us and we waste it on living however we want. We double down on our bad decisions and hurt ourselves and others in the process.

This is also the story of the younger son, the *prodigal son*;

### **Luke 15:11-13 Holman Christian Standard Bible The Parable of the Lost Son**

**11 He also said: “A man had two sons. 12 The younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of the estate I have coming to me.’ So he distributed the assets[a] to them. 13 Not many days later, the younger son gathered together all he had and traveled to a distant country, where he squandered his estate in foolish living.**

The word used here for *wild living* is only used once in the New Testament. It describes an extravagantly wasteful lifestyle. It may seem like the right thing for a time, and after all in the case of the younger son, he was only spending his rightful inheritance. But eventually the money runs out, the parties come to an end, and the nerves wear thin.

It’s at this point we realize we’ve squandered it all. In the words of the prophet Isaiah; “*We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way...*” (Isaiah 53:6)

Thankfully, that’s not the end of the prodigal’s story nor is it the end of ours.

### **No Longer Worthy**

Continuing in Luke 15 we read;

### **Luke 15:14-20a Holman Christian Standard Bible**

**14 After he had spent everything, a severe famine struck that country, and he had nothing. 15 Then he went to work for[b] one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. 16 He longed to eat his fill from[c] the carob pods[d] the pigs were eating, but no one would give him any. 17 When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired hands have more than enough food, and here I am dying of hunger! 18 I’ll get up, go to my father, and say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight. 19 I’m no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired hands.’ 20 So he got up and went to his father...**

There needs to be a time in each of our lives where we simply come to our senses and realize that our life will never be what it was meant to be apart from the Father. My prayer is that none of you here have to lose everything, become shattered, or have your dreams reduced to ashes...

But the good news is, we are able to make the decision to head home at any time. Some of us simply have to come to the end of our worth and realize that in Christ alone we are found worthy before the Father. Not based upon anything we can or cannot do but based upon the finished work of Christ on the cross.

As the younger son reaches his end, look at the confession he was practicing: "*Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you...*" He recognizes the depravity of his life and he understands his sin not only touches his earthly father but His heavenly Father as well.

### **Alive Again**

***Luke 15:20-24 Holman Christian Standard Bible***

***20b...so he got up and went to his father. But while the son was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion. He ran, threw his arms around his neck,[a] and kissed him. 21 The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight. I'm no longer worthy to be called your son.' 22 "But the father told his slaves, 'Quick! Bring out the best robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. 23 Then bring the fattened calf and slaughter it, and let's celebrate with a feast, 24 because this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!'*** So they began to celebrate.

This is one of the most beautiful scenes of compassion in the entire Bible. The younger son reaches bottom, and begins heading home. But even while he's still a long way from home, his father sees him and RUNS out to meet him.

You can almost hear the son's muffled apology coming through the sound of his father's warm embrace and smothering kisses. The younger man's humility, confession, and willingness to return home after having lost everything says a lot about his true character. Yes, he was physically starved and yes he was in a foreign land with nothing to show.

But there at rock bottom, what really mattered became clear to him. The abundance of food, mercy, compassion, warmth, etc... of his father's house called him home.

How many of you need to humble yourselves this morning, confess your sin against God and others, and return to the Father?

(Everyone needs to confess and repent...)

Let me ask you, *what's keeping you from the Father today?*

- Anger?
- Unforgiveness?
- Offense?
- Unmet expectations?
- Past hurts?

What can be confessed, repented of, and healed today?

James 5:16 says, *“Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.”*

Come home today.

Let's pray together.