

# One Body, Confessing Our Sin

Մէկ Մարմին, Խոստովանելով Մեր Մեղքը

**Nehemiah 9:1-5; James 5:13-16**

It is not popular to confess our sins. I look back to my childhood and school life. When any of us made any mistake (sin), no one took the responsibility to admit it.

Who wants to confess?

No one, I think...

**To confess to God, maybe... but to confess to each other... that is not easy, badveli.**

Why do I bring this topic in our main theme: **Lord, Make us One In CHRIST.**

Because it is biblical command and helps the body be united.

It is an important factor in building the body of Christ, the church, and the purpose of confession is healing and restoration, and **not destruction**.

Confession is a good discipline. **The root word of discipline is “disciple,” which comes from the Latin word *discipulus* meaning “student.”** Aren't we disciples of Christ?

I have two passages today to examine. The first one is from the book of Nehemiah.

## **Background:**

-The Israelites lived a disobedient life against God, Yahweh.

-They started to worship foreign gods, mixing with foreign nations....

-God exiled both the Northern and Southern kingdoms. The **Northern Kingdom** by the hands of **Assyrians 720 BC** and **Southern Kingdom** by the hands of **Babylonians 597 BC**.

That was not the end....

-God continued to love and care for His people. God renewed His covenant with His people. The Israelites came back; they were scattered, now they were assembled in Israel.

-They have not been together in worship in Jerusalem in the **temple more than 70 years**. They learned this lesson. We read:

**“God’s people must renew their commitment to covenant faithfulness, laying hold of God’s forgiveness and seeking to practice purity in their corporate and private lives.”<sup>1</sup>**

-Two important books in the Bible tell us about **reconciliation** and **reconstruction**, the books of **Ezra** and **Nehemiah**.

**“God in his mercy raised up Ezra the priest and teacher, and Nehemiah the governor, to lead his people in the hard work that this renewal requires.”<sup>2</sup>**

Before we go to the first passage in Neh. 9, let us read **Nehemiah’s prayer** in the first chapter:

**<sup>8</sup> “Remember the instruction you gave your servant Moses, saying, ‘If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations, <sup>9</sup> but if you return to me and obey my commands, then even if your exiled people are at the farthest horizon, I will gather them from there and bring them to the place I have chosen as a dwelling for my Name.’ (Nehemiah 1:8-9NIV11)**

God kept His promise and gathered them. And they built the walls of the city; but beside the **actual “stone” construction**, they also needed **“spiritual” construction**.

Brothers and sisters, you cannot get rebuild spiritually, if you don’t confess and open your heart to God. Without exposing the hidden sin there is no healing, no construction. There is no unity, especiall because their sin was a collective sin, **they all sinned against God**.

My sermon title: **One Body, Confessing Our Sin**

**On the twenty-fourth day of the same month, the Israelites gathered together, fasting and wearing sackcloth and putting dust on their heads. <sup>2</sup> Those of Israelite descent had separated themselves from all foreigners. They stood in their places and confessed their sins and the sins of their ancestors. <sup>3</sup> They stood where they were and read from the Book of the Law of the LORD. their God for a quarter of the day, and spent another quarter in confession and in worshipping the LORD their God. <sup>4</sup> Standing on the stairs of the Levites were Jeshua, Bani, Kadmiel, Shebaniah, Bunni, Sherebiah, Bani and Kenani. They cried out with loud voices to the LORD their God. <sup>5</sup> And the Levites— Jeshua, Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabneiah, Sherebiah, Hodiah, Shebaniah and Pethahiah— said: “Stand up and praise the LORD your God, who is from everlasting to everlasting.”(Neh 9:1-5 NIV 11)**

Let us analyze the text:

**1. They gathered.**

Nothing can replace this my dear friends, gather together in person.

**2. They mourned.**

Fasted, wore sackcloth, put dust on their heads....

**3. They Separated themselves from foreign people.**

Why? That was the root of the problem. They were following foreign gods; they were embracing their culture; they were mixing with them. That distracted them from obeying Yahweh.

If your problem is alcohol, you don't mourn and confess with a cup of whisky in your hand ...

**4. They Confessed**

**"They stood in their places and confessed their sins and the sins of their ancestors."**

Not only their sin collectively, but also the sins of their ancestors.

Our confession should be genuine. "I am confessing my sin, but you know it is not my problem what my parents did..." "God forgive us. We disobeyed you collectively for a long time... forgive us God..."

**5. They Read the Word of God (Torah)**

**"They stood where they were and read from the Book of the Law of the LORD their God for a quarter of the day,"**

Why are they reading His Word?

His Word is sharp like a sword. It penetrates our heart and mind.

When you read His Word, either you are encouraged, or you are rebuked.

**6. They Confessed**

**"And spent another quarter in confession and in worshiping the LORD their God"**

Now that is interesting. They confessed before reading His Word. They confessed after reading His Word.

Why? It happens to me as well. I bring my sin to God. Then I read His Word and I see that there are other sins that I did not bring it to God.

The law of the Lord is like a scanner, brings forth the issues, the hidden part of our heart....

They continued worshiping God.

Worship the Lord is to appear before the Lord (literally face of the Lord) in an **obedient frame of mind.**

**7. Leaders Cried Out**

Standing on the stairs of the Levites were Jeshua... **They cried out with loud voices to the LORD their God.**

<sup>5</sup> And the Levites—Jeshua... said: **“Stand up and praise the LORD your God, who is from everlasting to everlasting.**

Two weeks ago, we read psalm 100. We studied how the body worships together...

**Enter his gates with thanksgiving,  
and his courts with praise!  
Give thanks to him; bless his name!  
For the LORD is good;  
his steadfast love endures forever,  
and his faithfulness to all generations.** (Psalm 100:4,5)

**Leaders of the community**, we have a role as well. Beside confessing with the people, we cry out to God and bring the people to His mercy and loyal Love *Hesed*.

God is holy and just; He wants us to live holy life. That is the hard truth.

The same God is a God of mercy and compassion, grace and hesed.

**Unconfessed sin destroys.** Unconfessed sin destroys the church, the body of Christ. Sin damages the body.

The body works collectively. If there is a collective issue, it needs to be dealt with. Everyone must be right with God and that also means everyone should be in a right relationship with each other.

The Israelites learned their lesson, a hard lesson. **God uses confession to reunite the Body.**

**My second passage is from James:**

**Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise. <sup>14</sup> Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. <sup>15</sup> And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven.**

**<sup>16</sup> 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.** (James 5:13-16 NIV11)

In the first passage from Nehemiah, we see the confession was done collectively **to God**. In the James passage, we see the confession **done to each other**.

James talks about ministries in the church: (13-15)

-When someone is in trouble, let them they pray.

-Someone is happy, let them sing and praise...

-Someone is sick, the whole church prays for the person, the elders anoint them with holy oil.

Then he uses the word

**Therefore:**

Confess to each other...

“Confessing our sins to one another in the body of Christ can break the power of secret sin. Covering up sin has no profit but yields negative consequences: <sup>3</sup>

Psalmist says:

**“When I refused to confess my sin, my body wasted away, and I groaned all day long. Day and night your hand of discipline was heavy on me. My strength evaporated like water in the summer heat. Finally, I confessed all my sins to you and stopped trying to hide my guilt. I said to myself, ‘I will confess my rebellion to the LORD.’ And you forgave me! All my guilt is gone”** (Psalm 32:3-5 NLT)

-James is **commanding** we confess our sin to each other. (This is not a suggestion)

-Confess to brothers and sisters who can hold you in prayer for restoration and not gossip...

-Confess to brother and sister who helps you to fight secret addictions and sinful life. Please seek faithful and trusted brothers and sisters in Christ who will intercede for you in your battle with sin.

Talk to mature believers who can help you.

-But also, if you sinned against brother or sister, beside confessing to God, it is important that you confess to that person, seeking forgiveness and restoration.

-There is another type of sin which is a disease that destroys the church community, or any relationship: the sin of **gossip** and **judgment**.

This **confession is for healing, for the body of Christ to be edified and encouraged.**

Sin can damage us, externally and internally, but when we confess to God and to each other, God will bring a miracle and healing to the community.

When David confessed his sin, **he experienced the joy** of release, and he praised God with songs and psalms as a result.

## **Do we confess to each other?**

### **1. According to James passage, there are really only three basic types of confession:**

- 1) PERSONAL confession before God.
- 2) PUBLIC confession before the Church.
- 3) "ONE ANOTHER" confession to a close bro./sis. in Christ.

### **2. Do you have someone in this church you can confide in?**

Someone you can tell, someone you can trust "deepest darkest secrets" & still be loved?

### **3. One reason confession so difficult is because we usually:**

See church more as "fellowship of saints" vs. "hospital for sinners."

- 1) Everyone else has advanced far down road to holiness.
- 2) I am left here alone struggling with sin. Reality is we've all got a long way to go!

## **We are one body. We belong to each other and need each other.**

Lord, Make us ONE in CHRIST.

Let us approach the table

1. ESV Study Bible End notes, P 822
2. .ibid P 822
3. <https://www.gotquestions.org/confess-our-sins-to-one-another.html>