

**Series Theme:** *Confession and Absolution – Part 4 of 6*

# “TLH – Page 48”

Based on Various Passages

5<sup>th</sup> *Wednesday of Lent – 2011*

April 6 → 11:00 & 7:00

**Introduction:** Dear friends in Christ, we return again to the topic of **confession and absolution**:

- **To confess our sins** is to say they are *true*, be sorry that we have done them, and *desire to stop* them.
- **Absolution** is *God’s gift of forgiveness!*

So far we have tried to *better understand* and *benefit from* the forms of confession and absolution in Divine Service 1, 3, and 4. Today, we focus on the words from page 48 of The Lutheran Hymnal. Again, *like DS-4*, this one is different, and only used about six times each year at Bethlehem.

1. **Confession:** This form has five parts: (1) confess, (2) repent, (3) believe, (4) intend, and (5) believe:
  - a. (A *brief* pre-confession statement.) **And now I ask you before God, who searches the heart** [<sup>NAS</sup> 1 Chronicles 28:9 “As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a whole heart and a willing mind; for the LORD searches all hearts, and understands every intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will let you find Him; but if you forsake Him, He will reject you forever.”]: ***Do you sincerely*** [honesty, truthfully] ***confess*** [admit, acknowledge] ***that you have sinned against God and deserved His wrath and punishment?*** Even though we deserved such things, *Jesus propitiated our sins*; that means He

received our sins; *then God's wrath and punishment!*

<sup>NAS</sup> **1 John 2:2** “and He [Jesus] Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for *those of the whole world.*”

**I do confess.** Certainly, you should confess; for Holy Scripture declares: “If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” The Bible says: <sup>NAS</sup> **Romans 3:10** ...“There is none righteous, not even one...” Therefore, *let us admit that we have sinned!*

- b. **Do you heartily repent of all your sins committed in thought, word, and deed?** In other words, *with your entire being*, are you sorry for your sins and desire God's gift of forgiveness?

**I do repent.** Certainly, you should repent, as did the penitent sinners: **King David**, who prayed for a **contrite heart** [as recorded in Psalm 51]; **Peter**, who **wept bitterly** [after he said three times in regard to Jesus: “I do not know Him!” In other words, “I have no relationship with Him!” (Luke 22)]; **the prodigal son** [<sup>NAS</sup> Luke 15:21 “...the son said..., ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’”]; **and others** [such as Job and Zaccheus]. Repentance is not a one-time action *but an ongoing action*, since – *unfortunately* – we keep falling into sin.

- c. **Do you sincerely believe that God, by grace, for Jesus' sake, will forgive you all your sins?** In other words, we are not simply SAYING that we believe God will forgive us for Jesus' sake, *but we actually BELIEVE He will do it* – just as He has promised!

**I do believe.** Certainly, you should so believe, for Holy Scripture declares [we believe, not because it makes

sense, *but because God has declared it*]: “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.” Even though no one deserves God’s love, *God loved everyone*; then He proved it by giving His Son. Now, *through Him*, we are spared from hell and promised heaven!

- d. ***Do you intend that with the aid of the Holy Spirit you will, from this time forward, amend your sinful life?*** True sorrow for sin will always include a true desire to stop such sin; nevertheless, *we are weak!* As Jesus said: <sup>NAS</sup> **Matthew 26:41** “...the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.” Therefore, we do not rely upon ourselves for change, but upon the Spirit who lives within us; *He will guide us by the Word and enable us to do it* (Ephesians 3:20).

**I do intend. Certainly, you should so intend, for Christ, the Lord, says:** “Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.” For all who – *by God’s grace* – repent, *there is definite and significant change*: <sup>NAU</sup> **Luke 19:8** Zaccheus...said to the Lord, “Behold, Lord, half of my possessions I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will give back four times as much.”

- e. ***Finally, do you believe that through me, a called servant of God, you will receive the forgiveness of all your sins?*** We don’t believe it because it makes sense, *but because Jesus said these words to His disciples*: <sup>NAU</sup> **John 20:23** “If you forgive the sins of any, *their sins* have been forgiven them...”

**I do believe. As you believe, even so may it be unto you.** Jesus said similar words, for example:

To the woman who had been bleeding for 12 years: <sup>NAU</sup> **Matthew 9:22** ...“Daughter, take courage; your faith has made you well.”

To blind Bartimaeus: <sup>NAU</sup> **Mark 10:52** ...“Go; your faith has made you well.” Immediately he regained his sight...”

To the sinful woman who anointed Jesus’ feet with perfume: <sup>NAU</sup> **Luke 7:50** ...“Your faith has saved you; go in peace.”

2. **Absolution:** Upon this your confession, I, by virtue of my office, as a called and ordained servant of the Word announce the grace of God unto all of you, and in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. For more on this explanation, see *Part 2 of 6, DS-3*.<sup>1</sup>

**Conclusion:** Now, having a better understanding of *The Lutheran Hymnal, page 48 Confession and Absolution*, let us †confess our sins and †be certain of God’s forgiveness! And all God’s people said: *Amen!*

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<sup>1</sup> <http://blc7500.com/Content/UserFiles/Files/Sermons/2011/2011%20-%203,%20Divine%20Service%203.pdf>