

“Confession Obsession”

by
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What This is meant to take place during the confession and absolution liturgy, challenging people to really think about their words and actual meaning.

Themes: Confession, Redemption, Sin, God with Us, Liturgy

Who PST (Pastor) P4 (Joker)
P1 (Questioner) P5 (Biblical person)
P2 (Phariseeish) P6 (Practical)
P3 (Second questioner) P7 (Jesus person)

When Present

**Costumes
and
Props** Notebook
Pulpit or stand for Pastor

Why Galatians 4:3-5, Ephesians 5:3-5

How A surprise drama that takes place during a normal liturgical service. Actors are positioned throughout the congregation. Person 1 needs to be brave enough to stand up and interrupt the church service to initiate the drama.

Time 10 minutes

Parishioners are all standing, listening to the Pastor.

PST: I ask each of you in the presence of God who searches the heart, do you confess that you have sinned and do you repent of your sins?

All: I do.

P1: *(stands)* Excuse me...

PST: Do you believe that Jesus has redeemed you from all your sins and do you desire forgiveness in his name?

All: I do.

P1: Could I have that again please?

PST: Do you intend with the help of the Holy Spirit to live as in God's presence, striving daily to live a holy life even as Christ has made you holy?

All: I do.

P1: Hold on. Hold on. Could we stop there for a moment? Pastor, pastor, yes, over here. I've just got a few questions about this whole thing. Everybody, could you all sit down thanks. Just want to clear this up if that's okay. Yes, everybody sit down. This won't take long.

PST: Excuse me, but we're trying to have a worship service here. Could you explain yourself young man?

P1: I'm sorry, but I didn't quite catch what happened just now. Could we just go back a bit?

PST: Really, this is most disruptive.

P1: I do think it's very important.

PST: *(gives the person a long dark look)* How far?

P1: Just back to the start of the section.

PST: *(running through liturgy)* Let's see. A hymn may be sung, motion for the congregation to rise, "I ask each of you..."

P1: Yes, starting there.

PST: What. You mean "I ask each of you in the presence of God who searches the heart..."

P1: Yes. "In the presence of God." You said that quite quickly but it sounds pretty powerful. What's that all about exactly? Does anyone know?
(beat) Well, does anyone?

P7: *(pause)* Jesus?

P2: *(looking around to see if anyone else is going to answer; looks at the Pastor who is checking the time on his watch; finally answers himself)* I thought that was fairly obvious. We're in the presence of God. We're here and God's here.

P3: But isn't God everywhere? Why should it need to be stated?

P2: To remind us of that, I guess.

P3: What about in the Old Testament though, with the not being able to see his face and all that. Wasn't his presence supposed to kill you?

P5: *(standing holding a Bible)* "Then the Lord said, 'There is a place near me where you may stand on a rock. When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by. Then I will remove my hand and you will see my back; but my face must not be seen.'" (Exodus 33:21-23)

P3: Yes, exactly. So why don't we die? Pastor?

PST: *(looks around at everyone looking at him)* Well, yes indeed, God is here but turned away from us.

P4: You mean he's pointing his butt toward us?

PST: Well, yes.

Pause

P3: What about that next bit though, the whole searching the heart business. How often does he do that?

P2: During the confession of course, which is why it is said. Actually, there is a fairly large crowd here. Perhaps we should wait a little bit longer to give God time to search all our hearts. It would be a pity if he didn't quite get to the back row before we started saying the "I dos".

P4: *(edging his way backward down an aisle counting the people in front of him)* How long do you think it takes him to search the hearts of one row would you say?

P1: I'm sure he has plenty of time to search everybody's hearts, and anyway, I would imagine he would start with the back row.

P4 looks behind him and starts moving forward again, picking a seat in the middle.

P1: Isn't that amazing though? God, taking the time to search our hearts, we are that important to him.

P6: I don't know if I really like the idea of that. He'd know exactly what I think about him, and about other people, and about the church, and about being in church, not that I am not simply overjoyed about being here.

P3: Is he really that interested in all our dirty laundry?

P1: It seems so. Pastor, could you read that first question?

PST: What? Oh, hold on...I ask each of you in...

P1: No, the next bit.

PST: Ahh. Do you confess that you have sinned and do you repent of your sins?

P6: I always wondered about this. Does that mean all of our sins?

P2: Of course it means all of your sins. A sin's a sin isn't it. I always find it's quite handy to carry a little notebook around with you (*taking out a notebook*) so you can note down your sins when they happen. Then you won't forget any.

P4: That sounds like a great idea. Sometimes you could even save time and write them down in advance.

Pause

P3: I was always a little confused about the whole repent thing. What does repent mean?

P6: (*academically*)The prefix 're' means again, as in reconstruct, to construct again, or renew, to make new again. Now 'pent' is the past tense of pen, as to enclose in a pen. So repent would be to have enclosed in a pen again.

P1: What has that got to do with the forgiveness of sins?

PST: Repent actually means to "turn back". It is to make a change of mind, heart, and action, by turning away from sin and self and returning to God.

Some stunned silence

PST: I did go through seminary you know; I did learn something about...

P3: Hey, what about Tuesday?

P3 is holding P2's little notebook, looking through it.

P2: Give that back. That's personal.

Tries to grab it back. P3 holds it away from him.

P3: You said you write down all your sins in here, and you haven't mentioned anything about what you called me on Tuesday!

P2: What? Oh, come on. That wasn't a sin. You deserved it with the way you were carrying on, and it's not like I hit you or anything.

P5: "You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment."
(Matthew 5:21-22)

P2: Well, who said that then?

P7: Jesus!

P3: So, are you going to write it down on your little list now? *(Offering the notebook back)*

P2: *(takes it and takes out a pen)* Wait just a second. That's not going to work. There's that whole thing about repentance, isn't there? And though, yes, I'll admit it was a sin, I don't know whether I can repent of it. After all, I'm still annoyed at the way you were carrying on and if the same thing happened again, I'd probably act the same way.

P4: Well, go on, scribble it down for next week. Think ahead.

P3: Hey, don't try to put it back on me. I'm the one who was wronged.

P1: This is exactly the thing I was worried about. I'm not sure that I can repent of all my sins and I certainly can't recall all the sins that I've committed. So why are we all there automatically answering "I do"?

P2: What about that second question? *(Looks to Pastor)*

PST: *(is doing a crossword or something)* Hmmm. Oh. Do you believe that Jesus has redeemed you from all your sins, and do you desire forgiveness in his name?

P6: Now I'm a bit confused. We've already been redeemed from our sins, and now we are going to be forgiven?

P3: Well, what does "redeemed" mean then, (*P6 makes as if to speak*) apart from to be deemed again that is?

P5: "So also when we were children, we were in slavery under the basic principles of the world. But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive the full rights of sons." (Galatians 4:3-5)

P3: Oh, so being redeemed is like being bought out of slavery.

P2: I'm not a slave!

P3: Then why can't you repent and forgive?

P1: So he frees us from that which we cannot free ourselves.

P4: Who does?

P7: Jesus!

P1: And we receive forgiveness in his name.

P6: Where's the catch? What does it cost us?

P3: It costs us nothing. It cost... (*points to P7*)

P7: Jesus!

P3: Everything.

PST: Well that's all wrapped up then. We're all happy. Can we continue now?

P1: Wasn't there a third question?

PST: (*looks down, looks at his watch, sighs*) Do you intend with the help of the Holy Spirit to live as in God's presence, even as Christ has made you holy?

P6: See, I knew there was a catch.

P3: Here's that "God's presence" thing again. I was thinking, God's presence isn't just about fear is it? What about the God of Calvary? His presence also means protection, security, and love.

P2: You know what I said originally wasn't quite enough was it? Yes, we're here and God's here. But when you think about that a bit more, it means

PURCHASE
GOD IS HERE. The supreme being who created all the vast universe is here with us. Right now. That's pretty awesome.
Reverent pause.

P1: And it's not just here. We're meant to live as in his presence. Living holy lives, right? That's being nice all the time isn't it, a real goody, goody.

P5: "But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure, or greedy person—such a man is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God."
(Ephesians 5:3-5)

Pause

P4: Darn!

P1: But that's impossible. How are we meant to lead a holy life?

P3: I'm still not really sure that I really know what a holy life is. How are we meant to know?

P7: Jesus!

P3: Well yes. We can try to be like Jesus, but do we really know what that means?

P2: You know, I think the whole worship service is about answering that. The readings, the sermon, the offering, the prayers...

PST: Talking of the rest of the service...

P1: (*ignoring Pastor*) But come on. It's still impossible. I don't see how we can say "I do" to it.

P6: What about the rest of the question, though. We do have the help of the Holy Spirit.

P2: Yes, and with the help of God, all things are possible. What was that thing Jesus said about the camel?

P5: (*stands up and skims through the bible*) "You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel."

Pause

Everyone: What?

P5 sits down grumbling.

P6: And it isn't just the Holy Spirit, it also says that Christ has made us holy.

P2: *(breathing deeply)* Isn't it great to feel holy.

P4: Well, I'll be the first to say that I don't feel very holy.

P2: And you won't be the last.

P4: What was that?

P2 is already obviously writing in his notebook.

P1: Come on, do you really feel holy.

P2: *(waving little notebook)* Hey, I'll have you know this is a whole month's worth.

P1: But holiness is completely without sin, and not just the sins you recognize, but even the ones you don't. Face it, sin isn't just what we do, it's what we are.

P2 keeps waving his notebook for a little bit. Looks around and then sits down.

P3: When did he make us holy?

P4: Who?

P7: Jesus!

P6: At baptism. This whole thing is really just doing the baptism thing over again.

P3: You know, I guess I can imagine a baby as holy. But I don't feel holy, and I don't act holy, and yet I'm told that I am holy. That's pretty amazing.

P1: Gosh. So this whole thing isn't really about what we do or what we have done at all is it? It's really about what God has done for us, and what he continues to do for us.

PST: Right, so it's all settled then. Can we get back to the rest of the service now?

Everyone looks around at each other.

P1: Okay but let's do those questions again.

Lights out.

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SCRIPT

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