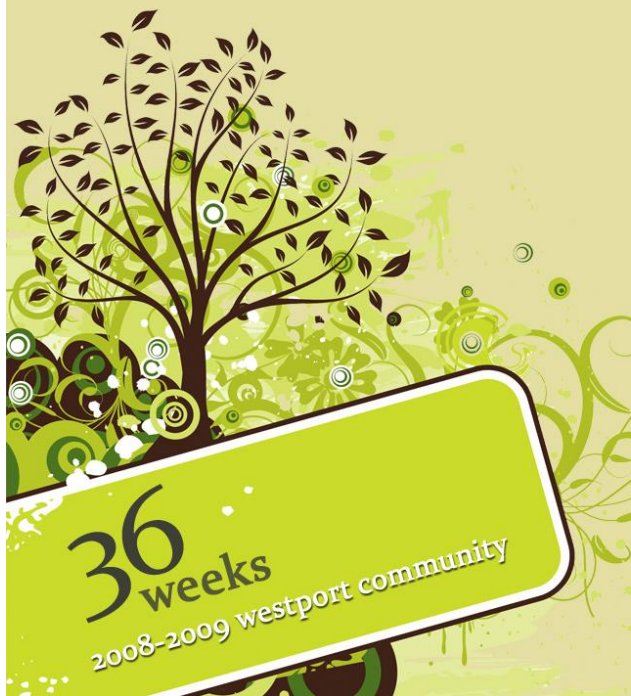


Sermon Study Guide

Week #2: Confession



CONFESSION

Introduction:

When's the last time you were asked to help a friend move? Are you still friends? I remember volunteering to help a friend move who owned an old upright grand piano. I think the frame was solid steel, or led. Whatever it was made of it was heavy, impossibly heavy, sweat till you die kind of heavy. Six middle aged guys barely huffed it up into the living room. All of us couldn't wait to set that thing down and take a deep breath, free of its weight. When I move heavy stuff I am reminded that our souls "carry" stuff as well...heavy stuff. One of the heaviest is sin and our dwelling on our sin. Sins can weigh down our souls like old upright grands made of lead. Lugging them around leaves us spiritually breathless. Ever felt this way? [discussion]

A Scottish proverb reads, "Confession is good for the soul." If this is true, what makes it so? [discussion]

Confession, as Tim talked about Sunday, is a discipline of *engagement*, exercised among trusted fellow apprentices of Christ. We let others know our deepest weaknesses and failures. We tell the "secrets" that have weighed us down for so long: the things that we are sure if anyone ever found out about us we'd lose our reputations, be rejected and scorned. Is this the case? Sometimes, but Tim invited us to think differently about confessing our sins to others. He talked about it being a true path to *freedom* and the only path to *growing closer* to others, to truly knowing one another the way God intended.

Movie Confessions:

- Spiderman 3 Sandman's confesses he didn't mean to kill uncle Ben, Spiderman's forgiveness.
- Father in Nanny McPhee confesses to children the reason he is marrying.
- Jean Valjean in Les Miserables confesses his identity as convict.
- While You Were Sleeping Lucy confesses she is not Peter's fiancé at the wedding.

Think of the richest relationships you know of. Do any of them include confession? [discussion]

If you've ever confessed anything to someone else you'd probably say it is both scary and cleansing, and freeing all at the same time. "I did it, I'm the one," is hard to admit. It often feels impossible among Christians. After all Christians never do anything wrong, right?

God desires for us to be free and connected all at the same time. Free to love and serve others and connected to others by really knowing them and them knowing us. Complete transparency is where true freedom in relationship lies. Humility is a benefit as well as knowing that you can share the load with others who care about you.

Explore Scripture:

“Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.” James 5:16

“He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy.” Proverbs 28:13

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 1:9

Action:

What would you confess right now, among those who care about you, so you may have this freedom?