

Main Idea: When we examine the epistle of James we discover that caring for one another involves four responsibilities involving verbal activity, two negative and two positive.

- I. Caring for one another involves *not* doing some things with our tongues.
- II. Caring for one another involves doing some things with our tongues.
 - A. We are to confess our sins to one another (5:16).
 - B. We are to pray for one another (5:16).
 1. The context is physical sickness.
 2. The intent is healing.
 3. The assurance is that the prayer of a righteous man is effective.
 4. The example is Elijah (17-18).
 5. The effect is to promote restoration (19-20).

Make It Personal: In order to care for one another as we ought, we need to address some questions about confessing our sins.

1. To whom should we confess our sins?
2. Why should we confess our sins to one another?
3. When should we confess our sins to one another?
4. How should we confess our sins to one another?
5. What are some dangers of confessing our sins to one another?
6. What’s the connection between confessing our sins to one another and praying for one another?
7. What makes confessing sin possible?

We’re seeking to grow in our ability to be a caring community in our current series, “*A People to Live with in the Crucible of Suffering*.” We’ve been asking the question, “What does it mean to *care* for people?”

Some would say that if you really care about people, then you’ll affirm and support them, no matter what they do, and you won’t question them, even if they do things that aren’t right, since it’s not *caring* to judge and question people. However, while affirming and encouraging are vital expressions of caring, so at times is...talking about sin.

Someone told me recently that in a job interview, he mentioned he went to Wheelersburg Baptist Church, and the interviewer blurted out, “Oh! They talk about sin at that church...and they tell you what to do about it.”

I took that to be a compliment, an evidence of God’s grace at work in our midst. We do talk about sin a lot, and why is that? I like John Stott’s explanation, “We are not in the least ashamed of the fact that we think and talk a lot about sin. We do so for the simple reason that we are realists. Sin is an ugly fact. It is to be neither ignored nor ridiculed, but honestly faced. Indeed, Christianity is the only religion in the world which takes sin seriously and offers a satisfactory remedy for it. And the way to enjoy this remedy is not to deny the disease, but to confess it.”¹

This morning we’re returning to a text we began to explore last week and ran out of time. We’ve been looking at the one another commands in the New Testament, and this case, we were looking at the command in James 5:16, “Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other.”

Part of being a caring people, as defined by God’s Word, involves acknowledging and confessing sin. But why should we confess our sins? It’s not because we’re

**Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church. It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

¹ John Stott, *Confess Your Sins*, p. 9.

enthralled with our sin. It's because we are enthralled with our Savior who has given us a solution for our sin, and His Word says that confession is part of experiencing His amazing solution.

"If we confess our sins," says 1 John 1:9, "He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." It's worth noting that there's no indirect object in 1 John 1:9. Confess our sins *to whom*? John doesn't say. He simply says, "If we confess our sins." James does say. Obviously, we're to confess our sins *to God*, but James also specifies *to one other*, as well, or as we'll explain more fully in a moment, to all appropriate others as well.

In his epistle, James gives us four one another responsibilities, and they all have to do with the tongue. If we're going to care for one another as we ought, James makes it clear that we need to use our tongues in four Christ-honoring ways, two negative and two positive.

I. Caring for one another involves *not* doing some things with our tongues.

As we saw last time...

A. We are not to slander one another (4:11). Literally, to "talk down" one another. That kind of verbal activity obviously short-circuits caring. As does this.

B. We are not to grumble against one another (5:9). As the NASB puts it, "Do not complain, brethren, against one another." And the AV, "Grudge not one against another." This kind of negative verbal activity, likewise, will kill a caring community.

So, if we're going to care for one another as our Savior intends, then slandering and grumbling against one another must go. There's no place for those destructive uses of our tongues. Conversely...

II. Caring for one another involves doing some things with our tongues.

We see both activities in verse 16, "Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective." We're commanded to do two things with our tongues.

A. We are to confess our sins to one another (5:16). The Young's Literal says, "Be confessing to one another the trespasses." And secondly...

B. We are to pray for one another (5:16).

It's vital to note the context of these two assignments, as we did last time. Any time a verse begins, "therefore," we must, as the adage goes, see what it's *there for*. What did the writer just say in the preceding paragraph or section that now leads him to make this conclusion?

So let's go back. For starters, let's go back to the very beginning. Why did James write this letter, and what did he say throughout the letter that would warrant such a concluding, "therefore"?

According to 1:1, he wrote this "to the twelve tribes scattered among the nations." So the people who first received this letter were Jewish Christians who were facing intense persecution that forced them to flee for their lives to the nations. That indicates these are hurting people, hated people. They're refugees. But they're also a special people, a people who had lost much but gained so much more because they now had Jesus! And by Jesus' gracious design, they had each other.

For five chapters James has encouraged his readers by talking about perseverance and faith and a host of practical matters pertaining to the Christian life. Then in the final

chapter, which is the immediate context, James calls for patient endurance in suffering. Verse 7—“Be patient, then, brothers, until the Lord’s coming.”

And that command reveals part of the problem. There was a need for patience. Some of James’ readers were losing hope and throwing in the towel. So James asks a series of three very concrete questions in verses 13-14, “Is any one of you in trouble? Is anyone happy? Is any one of you sick?” In any church you’ll find people in those three categories. What should the person in trouble do? James says he should pray. The happy person? He should sing songs of praise. And the sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil.

So there’s the context.

1. *The context is physical sickness.* The commands to “confess your sins to one another” and “pray for each other so you may be healed” occur at the end of a passage that begins with a question to those who are *sick*. And he tells the congregation that what the sick person did with the elders, they are all now to do with each other, confess sins and pray.

Let’s explore this word “sick” a little more carefully. In verse 14 James uses the Greek word *astheneo*. It can mean “to be sick or physically ill,” but it can also mean simply, “to be weak (as in discouraged or despondent).” The context determines whether it’s physical illness or emotional weakness.

I traced the word through the New Testament, and noticed that in the four Gospels and Acts it almost always refers to physical sickness. In Paul’s letters it’s often translated “weak,” as in Romans 14:1, referring to a person who is “weak in faith.” The verb doesn’t appear in the General epistles of Hebrews and Peter, but only here in James.

So which sense of the word does James have in mind? Is he talking about a person who is physically sick, as the English translators would suggest? Several good commentators suggest he’s not talking about the physically infirmed at all, but rather those with weak souls. He’s talking to brothers who are depressed and downcast because of the relentless persecution they’ve been facing, to the point they’ve thrown in the towel and have retreated to the sidelines.

That’s MacArthur’s position, as I shared last time. It’s also the interpretation given in the *Bible Knowledge Commentary*. Here’s what it says:

“Actually there is no reason to consider “sick” as referring exclusively to physical illness. The word *asthenei* literally means “to be weak.” Though it is used in the Gospels for physical maladies, it is generally used in Acts and the Epistles to refer to a weak faith or a weak conscience (cf. Acts 20:35; Rom. 6:19; 14:1; 1 Cor. 8:9–12). That it should be considered “weak” in this verse is clear in that another Greek word (*kamnonta*) in James 5:15, translated **sick person**, literally means “to be weary.” The only other use in the New Testament (Heb. 12:3) of that word clearly emphasizes this same meaning. James was not referring to the bedfast, the diseased, or the ill. Instead he wrote to those who had grown weary, who had become weak both morally and spiritually in the midst of suffering. These are the ones who **should call** for the help of **the elders of the church**. The early church leaders were instructed (1 Thes. 5:14) to “encourage the timid” and “help the weak” (*asthenōn*).”²

² Blue, J. R. (1985). James. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck, Ed.) (Jas 5:14–15). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

On the other hand, I read other solid commentaries which make a good case for the other position, that James *is* talking about a sick person here. The more I ponder the two possibilities, the more I see an overlap. Persecution is one contributor to weakness of soul, but so is chronic physical pain. When a person is physically ill, he too can become despondent, and even if he is a believer, he can shut down from seeing God in the trial and want to retreat and stop seeking first God's kingdom in the situation.

So there's an overlap. So if a believer finds himself with a weak soul, whatever the cause, and he's so weak that he's not functioning, what should he do? Pray? Sure, verse 13 says a person in trouble should pray, but he's done that. He's in a situation now where he's so weak, either literally or figuratively, he can hardly lift himself to pray.

So what should he do? James says he should call in the reinforcements. That's verse 14, "He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord."

The elders are the shepherds of the flock, the pastors, the spiritual leaders. He's to ask them to come so they can do two things for him. Pray, which is the main verb indicating it's the main assignment, and anoint, which is a participle, indicating the anointing is a secondary, support role assignment.

It seems to me that the anointing with oil is symbolic. It's an expression of physical care, perhaps with medicinal connotations³ in the first century⁴, intended to encourage the recipient, and perhaps to let him know that God still had something special in store for him (kings were anointed with oil, so were priests, and prophets, as they were set apart for their coming ministry). The *Bible Knowledge Commentary* explains:

It is significant that the word "anoint" is *aleipsantes* ("rub with oil") not *chriō* ("ceremonially anoint"). The former is the "mundane" word and the latter is "the sacred and religious word" (Richard Chenevix Trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament*. ninth ed. Reprint. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1950, pp. 136–37). "Therefore James is not suggesting a ceremonial or ritual anointing as a means of divine healing; instead, he is referring to the common practice of using oil as a means of bestowing honor, refreshment, and grooming" (Daniel R. Hayden, "Calling the Elders to Pray," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 138. July/September 1981: 264). The woman "poured" (*aleiphō*) perfume on Jesus' feet (Luke 7:38). A host "put oil" (*aleiphō*) on the head of his guest (Luke 7:46). A person who is fasting should not be sad and ungroomed, but should "put oil" (*aleiphō*) on his head, and wash his face (Matt. 6:17). Thus James' point is that the "weak" (*asthenei*) and "weary" (*kamnonta*) would be refreshed, encouraged, and uplifted by the elders who rubbed oil on the despondents' heads and prayed for them.⁵

And what's the intent of this praying and anointing? James says...

2. *The intent is healing.* Verse 15—"And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be

³ Jay Adams affirms this. He says that the elders rubbing with oil was medicinal, an activity today that has been superseded by the physician (Jay Adams, *A Thirst for Wholeness*, p. 133).

⁴ Mark 6:13 "They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them."

⁵ Blue, J. R. (1985). James. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck, Ed.) (Jas 5:14–15). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

forgiven.” So the aim of the calling and praying and anointing is the physical and spiritual restoration of this afflicted brother.

Does James say that every time the elders pray over and anoint a sick person that the result will be healing? No. He gives a specific stipulation. He says *the prayer offered in faith* will result in healing. Not the sick person’s, but the elders.

I won’t go back over last week’s discussion of this, but will just lay out our conclusion. I take it from James’ wording that not all prayers for the sick are “prayers offered in faith,” or literally, “the prayer of faith.” We often pray for the sick and don’t know what our sovereign Lord will do. And that’s fine. We trust He will do what’s best, either heal or not heal, for He is sovereign, wise, and good. But sometimes He grants assurance, sort of like “the gift of faith” that Paul mentions in 1 Corinthians 12:9, a gift that the Lord gives to some of His people, the assurance that He’s going to work. That particular prayer of faith, because it has come, not just from the elders but ultimately as a gift from the Lord Himself, *will* make the sick person well.

To summarize, James says that when the sick person calls, and the elders pray and anoint oil, and when God grants the elders the gift of faith which grants them assurance that He will indeed answer their prayer, then their prayer *will* make the sick person well, and God *will* raise him up.

What’s more, the end of verse 15 says that if there’s been sin associated with the sickness, which isn’t always the case but sometimes is, he will be forgiven. And it’s that comment that brings us to our text.

Therefore, says James as he begins verse 16. With the account of the brother who humbles himself and calls for the elders of the church in mind, James identifies two general assignments for every church member.

“Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.”

The whole church is now exhorted to engage in the same two verbal activities practiced in the situation with the elders and the sick person. Confessing and praying. First, *confess your sins to each other*. And then, *pray for each other*.

And the intended result of both activities is the same. *Healing*. Just as it was with the brother on his bed of affliction. The goal of our mutual confession of sin and prayer is to see people restored, made whole, mended, brought back to a place of proper function in the body.⁶

We left off last time with some important questions about what this means for us, and we’re going to address those questions, and some others, momentarily. But first, I want us to see how James finishes the rest of his letter.

After giving this exhortation to confess and pray, James next gives...

3. *The assurance is that the prayer of a righteous man is effective*. Notice the end of verse 16, “The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.” Why should we spend time praying with and for each other, especially when someone isn’t doing so well? Here’s why. Because when a righteous man prays, there’s power and it

⁶ Heres’ the *Young’s Literal* translation of this paragraph, “Doth any one suffer evil among you? let him pray; is any of good cheer? let him sing psalms; ¹⁴is any infirm among you? let him call for the elders of the assembly, and let them pray over him, having anointed him with oil, in the name of the Lord, ¹⁵and the prayer of the faith shall save the distressed one, and the Lord shall raise him up, and if sins he may have committed, they shall be forgiven to him. ¹⁶Be confessing to one another the trespasses, and be praying for one another, that ye may be healed; very strong is a working supplication of a righteous man.”

produces an effect. That's what effectual means. And to support the point, James gives an example.

4. *The example is Elijah (17-18).* That's verses 17-18, "Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops."

If we don't look at the flow of the text, we might assume that James is changing subjects in the final paragraph. He's not. He's showing the effect that this confessing sin and praying for one another, particularly for our weak brothers, will have.

5. *The effect is to promote restoration (19-20).* Notice verses 19-20, "My brothers, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back, remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins."

So not only must we take sin seriously, but we're also to take seriously our responsibility to restore those who are trapped in sin. In this case, as the *Bible Knowledge Commentary* points out, "These who have lost their way are the 'sick ones' of the church family. They have wandered away... Wandering ones need to be brought back to the fold... Revival, not redemption, is in view."⁷

Make It Personal: In order to care for one another as we ought, we need to address some questions about confessing our sins.

Again, James gives this command, "Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed." If we're going to implement this command, we need to get some clarity regarding seven questions.

1. *To whom should we confess our sins?* Some would say we should confess our sins to a priest, since a priest has direct access to God. I would agree with that as long as we define our terms biblically. Who is a priest?

For starters, Jesus Christ is the Great High Priest, so we should confess our sins to Him (Heb 4:14-16). Furthermore, the Bible teaches that *every* person who knows Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord has direct access to God and is therefore a priest (1 Pet 2:5, 9; Rev 5:10).⁸

James affirms this. He says we should confess our sins, not just to church leaders (or elders), but more broadly, *to each other*, to our brothers and sisters in Christ.

So which brothers should we approach? If we're talking about confessing our sin in order to get help for it, here's a guideline. Make sure the person is competent to provide God-glorifying help. In Romans 15:14 Paul describes such a person, "I myself am convinced, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to instruct [Greek *noutheteo*, could be translated "counsel"] one another." Those are the marks of a person who is competent to counsel you in dealing with your sin. He or she is full of goodness (i.e. has Christlike character), complete in knowledge (i.e. knows the Scriptures), and competent to instruct (i.e. knows how to use the Scriptures to provide God-honoring solutions).

⁷ *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*. "The Greek word here (*planēthē*) suggests one who has missed his path and is hopelessly lost. "Planet" was taken from this Greek word to convey the idea that the luminaries were "wandering stars" (cf. Jude 13), not "fixed" like the rest. "

⁸ It's called the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers.

2. *Why should we confess our sins to one another?* For three reasons. Stated simply, one, for your sake; two, for your brother's sake; and three, for the Lord's sake. It's for your sake because the act of confessing is part of God's procedure for restoring you to Himself. It's for your brother's sake because the act of confessing reestablishes or at least strengthens a relationship in the Body of Christ. And it's for the Lord's sake because He gets honor when His people take steps to deal with their sin in the way He has provided.

But let me approach this question from a little different perspective. Why should I go to a brother regarding my sin problem? It's because my brother is a fellow sinner and therefore understands my dilemma. He's been there, and in fact, he *is* there. Yet more importantly, he not only understands the problem of sin, he's experienced the solution for it. He can help me because He knows the Savior. And as one who knows the Savior, he can help me unravel this sin problem that's plaguing me and do something about it, namely, pray for me and help me overcome it.

3. *When should we confess our sins to one another?* The short answer is twofold; one, when my sin affects my brother, and two, when dealing with my sin could be helped by my brother. In those two situations I should go and confess my sin to my brother.

In the first case, if I've sinned against my brother, I need to go to him and confess it to him (e.g. Matt 5:24). In the second case, if my brother could help me deal with my sin problem, even if it wasn't against him, I should seek his help, as should the weak-souled person in seeking the elders' help.

Or to put it another way, at times I need to confess my sins to my brothers, not because I sinned against them, but to gain their help in overcoming my sin. That's what biblical counseling is all about, and I've experienced the blessing of it from both sides of the desk.

Is it easy to open up your life to another person and talk about your sin? No. It takes humility and transparency. And wisdom. Let me say it again. When you confess your sin to another person, make sure that person is competent, as biblically defined, to help you with your sin before you disclose it.

The story is told about three Christian men who were meeting for accountability, and having read James 5, they decided to put it into practice. "Let's share our sins with each other, and let's be specific, no generalities," suggested one. And the others agreed.

"Okay, here goes. I struggle with lust," said the first man. "And since we agreed to be specific, well, I've lusted after So-and-so at church."

"My sin is coveting," said the second man. "I'm never content with what the Lord has given me, and since you want specifics, here it is. I want, in fact, I lay awake at night coveting that nice house that belongs to So-and-so at church."

The third brother just sat there in silence. Finally, the first brother said to him, "Well, what about you? What sin do you struggle with? Be honest. We were."

"Okay," he said, with a peculiar sort of look in his eyes. "My biggest sin is gossiping. I have a terrible time keeping my mouth shut. And to be honest, I can hardly wait to get out of here and share with some people the things I've just heard!"

Let's take this a step further. We're answering the question, *when should we confess our sins to one another?* In his helpful commentary, Alec Motyer points out that there are three kinds of confession.

First, there is *secret confession*. That's made to God alone because the sin is secret and known to God alone (Psalm 90:8 "You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of your presence.").

Then there's *private confession*. Some sins are committed against man as well as against God. The sin may be against one person, or two, or more. In that case, in order to make things right, we need to confess our sin to them and ask for their forgiveness (as in Matthew 5:23-24, "If you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.").

And thirdly, there's *public confession*. Some sins are committed against a group, perhaps a family, or a congregation, or a community, or even a nation. And when a person's sins hurt the group, the group needs to receive a confession, a public confession, not so it can condemn, but so it can extend forgiveness. We see an example of public confession in the case of sinning church leaders in 1 Timothy 5:20, "Those who sin are to be rebuked publicly, so that the others may take warning."

Motyer rightly observes that James *isn't* calling for the mutual confession of *secret* sins. We're to confess our secret sins, like lust and coveting, to God alone, for He alone knows. But if my sin is against my brother, or affects my brother, then my confession needs to be to my brother, or to my *brothers* if it's plural. "Confession must be made *to* the person *against* whom we have sinned," clarifies Motyer, "and *from* whom we need and desire to receive forgiveness."⁹

4. *How should we confess our sins to one another?* The verb "confess" is *exhomologeo* and means "to acknowledge, to admit, to agree."¹⁰ So that's what we're to do with our sins (Greek *harmartia*, "a missing the mark"). We are to acknowledge them, admit to them, and agree with what God says about them.

To whom? We're to make confession, first to the Lord, for all sin is ultimately against Him, and then to the person (or persons) against whom we've sinned. So if it's Roger, then I need to go to Roger and say, "Roger, I need to confess something to you. I've sinned against you. I was wrong for _____. I've asked God to forgive me. Now I want to ask you to forgive me. Will you?"

And if you're Roger, and you hear that confession, what should you say? Not, "Oh, don't worry about it." Rather, "Thank you, brother. I forgive you, just like God has forgiven me, for Christ's sake. And that means I'll never bring it up again, or talk to others about it, or dwell on it yourself. You are *forgiven*."

Those are liberating words, and your brother needs to hear them.

So how far should the confessing go? This is critical, so let's clarify. Generally speaking, as Kent Hughes explains, "The confession should not exceed the range of commission."¹¹ Which means, if I have sinned against you, then to be restored, I need to confess my sins, yes, to God, but also to you, as I seek your forgiveness. And sometimes, it's not just those I've sinned *against*, but those who have been affected by my sins that I need to hear my confession.

Case in point? David's confession of his sin with Bathsheba. In Psalm 51 David made public confession of his adultery and murder, and the heading over Psalm 51

⁹ Alec Motyer, *James*, p. 202. Motyer is quoting John Stott, *Confess Your Sins*, p. 12.

¹⁰ In other contexts it's used in the sense of acclaiming or even praising.

¹¹ Hughes, p. 266.

suggests he gave this confession to the director of music. In other words, he made public confession of his sin. Why? Because his sin affected the testimony of God in the whole nation, and his confession of sin could help the whole nation.

5. *What are some dangers of confessing our sins to one another?* One very real danger is the person who refuses to leave his sin. He just wants to talk about it, and particularly with other people, as happens in many so called recovery groups, where there's not much recovery taking place, but a lot of rehashing of past sin. No. The biblical purpose of confessing sin is in order to leave it at the cross and move on to righteousness, by the grace and power of God.

Another danger is TMA, too much information. In confessing our sins, there's no need to relive the sin with all its gory details. That wouldn't be edifying to our brother who's listening. Stick to the basics.

Another danger is the mishandling of a confession. A brother comes to you for help with his sin, and you minimize it, on the one hand, or you condemn him for it, on the other. Since it's not our standard he violated, we have no right to condone what he's done. But since we're not the Judge, we have no right to condemn him either. Our assignment is to take our brother to the Word and remind Him of what God says, about the seriousness of the problem *and* the sufficiency of the solution.

6. *What's the connection between confessing our sins to one another and praying for one another?* James ties them together, and says that working together, they bring healing and wholeness. There's the connection. When we share our sins with a brother, and then our brother helps us take those sins to God in prayer, the Lord does the necessary healing work.

Where did James get this connection? From Jesus. In Matthew 18, Jesus makes the same connection. In verses 15-17 He gives the steps for recovering a person in sin, which involves brothers going after him and urging repentance, in other words, urging him to confess his sin. Then in verses 18-19, He talks about the power of prayer, and the context indicates that it's prayer for that brother. Jesus says, "I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven."

So when a brother confesses his sin, and his brothers pray for him, God grants the petition that's brought to Him, and brings restoration and healing.

Here's another danger. "Well, I'll just make my confession to God. I won't go to my brothers." Then your brothers won't be able to *agree with you*, for you've not acknowledged your sin to them. And therefore, they can't pray with and for you about your sin problem, as Jesus says should happen. And that means, you're left to yourself to handle it. His way is so much better.

7. *What makes confessing sin possible?* Simply this. In the person and work of Jesus Christ, God has provided a remedy for our sin problem. Friends, mere confession doesn't remove our sin, for a holy God must punish sin. But when we confess our sin in the name of Jesus Christ, that is, by putting our total trust in God's Son and what He accomplished on the cross, then God forgives our sin. That means, He chooses *not* to hold our sin against us because His Son already paid the penalty for it. And that is what makes confessing sin and receiving full forgiveness for sin possible!