

Rediscovering the Joy of Being with God and His People—Week Ten

Practicing the discipline of confession during Advent

Of all the spiritual practices we might associate with Advent, **confession is often overlooked.** Perhaps we associate confession and repentance more with Lent. Yet we often read these words of Isaiah as quoted in the Gospel of Mark during Advent: **A voice of one calling: “In the desert prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God. Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. And the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it. For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”**
Isaiah 40: 3-5

Consider

- What valleys, mountains or rough places are there in your heart and life that are getting in the way of Jesus coming to you in the here and now? These are the dark places where we must let Jesus shine his light and reveal to us where we need to repent this Advent so that there are no obstacles that get in the way of his coming to us.
- Do you need to confess your sin to a trusted Christian friend? Richard Foster says: **In the Book of Common Prayer we read these encouraging words following the call to self-examination and repentance: “If there be any of you who by this means cannot quiet his own conscience herein but require further comfort or counsel, let him come to me or some other minister of God’s word, and open his grief...”** God has given us our **brothers and sisters to stand in Christ’s stead and make God’s presence and forgiveness real to us.”**

Pray

- Prayerfully meditate on the scripture above and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal those places where you need to repent. Perhaps there is an obvious area of sin to deal with, or maybe you’re struggling with pride, anger, jealousy or despair. Perhaps a change in attitude is needed, a bad habit that has to be rejected, or a relationship that needs reconciliation.
- Ask God to show you who might be a good person to confess your sin to—a trustworthy, understanding and sensitive Christian who will take your sorrow over your sin seriously, keep your confidence and assure you of God’s promise that “as far as the east is from the west so far has he removed our sin from us.” Psalm 103:12

Act

- Come to Jesus. He longs to bring us peace and pardon, and is himself the only way that the rough places in our hearts can be made smooth to receive him. Confess your sin and ask that he would show you the way forward and give you the tools to make things right.
- Write your confession out as clearly as possible and tell it to a trusted Christian who can help you find the freedom of God’s forgiveness.
- **We are praying for you to experience the joy of drawing near to God as you confess the things that are clouding your beholding of his glory.**

