

Confess Christ Matthew 10:32–33

Augsburg Confession 6-25-17

At the end of the movie *Braveheart*, William Wallace makes a confession just before his execution for fighting for freedom denied his people by the ruling class in England. The priest pleads, “Confess, Wallace! It will be good for you to acknowledge the error of your ways, the futility of your fight. Confess Wallace, confess!” With his last breath, Wallace did confess, but it was a confession of freedom, that it was worth fighting for and worth dying for. His confession to all who would hear was that in the end they will be free.

As compelling as that is, it pales in comparison to the everlasting freedom that comes from confessing Jesus Christ as Savior by grace alone through faith alone! In the city of Augsburg, at a major convention called by the Emperor Charles V, men of God were willing to die for the freedom to make this public confession in Christ.

Today we observe with thanks to God the Presentation of the Augsburg Confession on June 25, 1530. Philip Melancthon, Martin Luther, and German lay leaders of the Church put their lives at risk to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus.

George the Confessor, a German nobleman and signer of the Augsburg Confession, said to the Emperor, “Before I would deny my God and His Gospel, I would rather kneel down before your Imperial Emperor and let you cut off my head.” What a confession.

Those who signed on to the Augsburg Confession were doing what the Church has always done, “saying the same thing that Jesus had spoken in His Word”. Their very lives, and the lives of all who believe depended on it.

The word *confess* means to “say the same thing.” In confessing our sins, we agree with God that we need forgiveness. A confessing Church agrees with Jesus about sin, death, forgiveness, eternal life and all matters of Biblical teaching.

It is a confession that saves the soul even after those of this world have killed the body. A Christian can face such a death because of Jesus’ promise: “*Everyone who acknowledges Me before men, I also will acknowledge before My Father who is in heaven.*” He said that knowing they would face temptations to deny Him before men.

In presenting the Augsburg Confession, that was a real danger. For seven years, Luther had been under the death sentence since refusing to recant his teachings. Though not present physically, his teachings were there at Augsburg.

Why would they risk their lives for this public confession? Because there is in Christ a freedom worth living for and even dying for.

Freedom from what? Freedom from the fear of those who can only kill the body but not the soul. Freedom from the condemnation of confessed sins. Today many find freedom in Christ from unwanted sexual desires, many different kinds of addictions and unhealthy attachments. Christ has also freed families from the hurt of broken relationships. In Him, we are free from trying to find security in possessions or politics. We are free from seeking value in worthless pursuits and passions.

Because the holy Son of God considered us precious enough to lay down his life for us, we know our true value. We do not measure it by our physical fitness, appearance, accomplishments, perfectionism, popularity, FB friends, financial wealth, wit, or intelligence. We measure our value by the sacrifice Christ himself made for you and me. This is the teaching of God’s Word and reinforced by the Augsburg Confession. It is a confession worth dying for, since it is about the One who considers us worthy dying for.

Why else would those men in 1530 confess Christ despite the dangers? It was good for their souls. But they also knew that others needed to hear this Good News for the good of their souls also. And as spiritual heirs of this Confession it is no less our joy and privilege to confess Christ. It is good for us and good for the world. Amen.