

LD 11; Acts 16:25-34; Rom. 10:9-13; Who do You Say that He Is? I. The Command II. The Confession III. The Comfort

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, confessing what is true is always important. Imagine for a moment that you have been called into court to give your testimony. You have witnessed a crime, and the judge will ask you- do you swear to tell the truth- the whole truth- and nothing but the truth? The reason that confessing the truth is important in the courtroom setting is because if the witness lies, the guilty will go free or the innocent will be condemned. But did you know that the command to speak the truth applies to the Christian life in general as well? As the title for our sermon asks- who do you say that Jesus is? This question posed by Jesus in Matthew 16, gets to the heart of our sermon today. Who do you say that Jesus is? What do you know and what do you confess about Him? It is often said that nothing is certain- that nothing last forever. But is that true? Can you be certain about something? What must you know, believe and confess in order to have a lasting and certain hope? Today as we have witnessed the profession of faith, we ask ourselves the question. Who do I say that this Jesus is? Who is He? What must I know, believe and confess about Him? We look at this theme: Jesus Christ commands us to believe and confess the truth concerning His identity. We are moving in the AC from the 1st to the 2nd person of the Trinity this morning.

I. The Command

We start in our first point by considering the command given in Acts 16. Now you will remember that Paul and Silas have been unjustly put in prison in Philippi- and after a sudden earthquake they are given the opportunity to witness to the jailer. Struck down in his fear and dread, the jailer asks- what must I do to be saved? And Paul responds in Acts 16:31- believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved. Now this comes as a command in this passage- an imperative. "Pisteuson" in the Greek- meaning you must believe. So it is, that if this person- or any person- wants to be saved- the only way in which you can be saved is if you believe. Now belief is a confidence, a trust, dependence and reliance. As we have seen

back in LD 7- true faith is knowledge, conviction and assurance. So for anyone who wants to be saved- and we will look at what salvation is in our 3rd point- if you want to be saved your only course- your only option is to believe in this one called Jesus. So, believing in Jesus is not just good idea- something you can take or leave at your convenience. No, the command to believe in Jesus is given as a divine must! If you want to be saved- this is the answer. The only way! Or as Acts 4 says, there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we can be saved. You all must put your weight on Him- resting on Him and His works- or else you will not be saved. As a Savior, Jesus stands alone. As explained in QA 30- you either have Jesus or you have someone or something else. Jesus does not and will not work with other creatures. He alone saves- and He alone must be the object of your trust! But who is this Jesus? Well, the Jesus that Paul is speaking about is the Jesus of Nazareth. The one who was named by angels at the beginning of the book of Matthew. He is named Jesus because He will in fact save His people from their sins. Or as our QA 29 explains, the Son of God is called Jesus because He saves us from our sins. Salvation is not to be sought nor can it be found in anyone else. So there is only one way to be saved- only one path to peace between God and man! Only one way to escape the coming destruction and judgement that our sins deserve. And that one way is by believing. So if you want to be saved- then you will listen to what God commands! Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved! The Son of God was sent to be our mediator- our messiah. The one through whom deliverance would come. So take God at His word- and believe in His Son, Jesus! As a divine imperative- a command from on Him- we ignore these words to our own peril! This must be in your heart- believe in your heart as Rom. 10 says. This personal conviction is deeply rooted- you cannot just go through the motions. You have to have this firm belief within! Held onto with both arms!

II. The Confession

But as we continue, we see that the command to believe is not the only aspect of the Christian life. In fact, we read in Rom. 10, we find an if/then statement. As a proposed question- with a conditional

consequence. So in our first point we say that the command to believe in Jesus stands. In our second point we find that in Rom. 10, Paul uses the conditional statement to construct an argument. If you confess and believe, then you will be saved. So we are approaching the question in a slightly different way- but we come to same conclusion! Note that faith believed and confessed! We also note that Paul links belief and confession together. So if you believe you will confess. The heart and the mouth are directly linked. The mouth speaks as an overflow of the heart. So then, in Rom. 10:9 we find- if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord. Confess- a confession of faith if you will. Here God's people are called to acknowledge with their lips what is true- and to express with words what resides in their heart. The words you proclaim are audible- they can be heard and perceived. They are public. Confession is not something that is secret and private- but something that is open and shared! Well then, what is the content of this confession. What are God's people supposed to say when they make this confession? Well, you can see in our text that the identify of Jesus is the center of this confession. Not that this is all we need to know- but for a Jewish person coming out of the OT, this was the center of their new faith. That Jesus is the Son of God- He is One with the Father- the only begotten Son. That Jesus is Lord- meaning that He is your master. That you belong to Him- that He owns you and your life. And that He has been raised from the dead. He is not a dead savior- but a living one! He has risen, just as He said! He is very much alive- and He continues to live even to this very day. So the true faith that is confessed is a faith that has content- it knows and states something that is believed and something that is true! Jesus does not want any secret admirers. You know what a secret admirer is like. They say that they are in love with someone- but they have never told that person. That is not love- for true love is known. Let us love in deed and truth. What good would it be to get married- if you never told anyone? So it is with Jesus- if we love Him we will tell Him- and tell others! Our God wants a public- verbal and visible- commitment from His people! You remember, Nicodemus, right. Remember that he went to visit Jesus at night in John 3- and the reason he went to see Jesus at night was because he was likely

afraid of men! In fact, it is usually the fear of men that causes those who would be Christians to be silent about their faith. What will they think of me- what will others say about me if I am too open- too vocal about my faith. Will my classmates snicker- will my co-workers ridicule? But Acts 16 makes it clear- true faith is not only a inner acceptance, but also a external and observable reality. Now in linking these two- we see that both are needed! Both faith and confession. To say this another way- there is no salvation without confession and belief! So if you truly believe, you will confess that faith! What lives in your heart makes itself known audibly and visibly. The heart alone is not where faith stops and stays- true faith is a living and active faith that can be witnessed in what you say and how you live. But let me be clear hear, a public profession of your faith is much more than a one-time event! You can confess your faith long before you are able to stand here in front of church- and you must confess your faith long after you have stood up here in front of church! In fact, you have the opportunity to publicly confess your faith every week! Let me know if this sounds familiar. I believe in God the Father, almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, our Lord! That right- every week the church stands and publicly confesses their faith together- knowing that those who believe in their hearts and confess this truth with their mouth will be saved!

III. The Comfort

In our last point, we bring out the comfort that is received. How do we benefit when we believe in our heart and confess our faith with our mouth? Well, this benefit is that of salvation! You will be saved! Not might be- it is not a possibility or an option. You will be – certainly- without a question- be saved. There is a direct connection- promised to those who believe. The necessary consequence of the if/then statement. If you believe and confess, you will be saved! This benefit is promised on the personal level- a promise made to specific people. Notice what we read in Acts- You must believe. You, Philippian jailer. You must believe and you will be saved! And again in Rom. 10- believe in your heart and confess with your mouth and you will be saved. In other words, you cannot rely on the belief or confession of

another! No one can do it for you! You will stand before the judgement throne of God and you will have to give an account- did you believe and did your life bear this belief out? That is one of the points made in QA 30- if you look to others for salvation- if you trust in anything other than Jesus- you are still in your sins. If you do believe and confess faith in Jesus- you will be saved! As simple as that! So the benefit of true faith in the heart and a public confession with the mouth is salvation. But what is thing called salvation? Well, salvation simply means deliverance. In this context, then, to be saved is to be made whole, healed, delivered, rescued and made safe! We are saved from our sin- set free from the bondage and slavery of rebellion that leads to death. Set free from the just judgement we deserve because of our rebellion. We are saved by Jesus- for that is what His name means as we saw in LD 11. He is Jesus- meaning Savior. We are saved unto eternal life. We are saved for eternity- never to lose this gift of everlasting life.

To conclude, believing and confessing your faith in Jesus is a wonderful privilege. For those who believe and confess will be saved! We started our sermon in the courtroom. If you were called into court- if you were being put on trial as a Christian- would your words be enough to convict you? Would your faith and profession be clear to all- to leave without a doubt- that you believe in God the Father, Jesus Christ His Son, and the Holy Spirit? Jesus Christ commands us to believe and confess the truth concerning His identity. Praise God that Jesus has been and is faithful to His name- for He is Jesus- He saves His people from their sins! Who do you say that Jesus is? Is He your Savior- then profess your faith in Him!