

Why Do Worship Services Include Confession and Absolution?

*Lost Son

Luke 15:11-32

Sins Confessed, Forgiveness Received

Having learned about private confession in confirmation class, I decided to check it out. So I called my pastor to set up an appointment for private Confession and Absolution. Making the call was easy, but then things became more difficult. As the day of my appointment grew closer, I began to run through in my mind a number of ways I could get out of it. I thought about simply not showing up or of feigning sickness or some last minute situation that would necessitate postponing my appointment for some vague, future time.

My struggle wasn't that I'd done anything unusually bad, just the normal, run-of-the mill sins, at least for me. I had talked back to my parents a few times, told a few well-formulated lies when I found myself in a tight situation, thought a few thoughts I didn't want anyone else to know about. Nothing big. It's just that I didn't want my pastor to think of me as a sinner. I wanted to keep his respect; I knew he liked me, at least up until now.

But as the time for our meeting arrived, I amazed myself by resolving to go through with our meeting. I decided God would want me to get real with myself and with my pastor about my sins. After all, I reasoned, if it weren't for sin, the pastor would find himself without a job. And I was sorry for my sins. I knew Jesus had paid for them and I regretted the way my sin had contributed to His suffering and death.

As always, the pastor was warm and friendly. He began with a few words from Psalm 51 and then invited me to confess the sins I had committed. I simply spoke them to him, realizing that big or small, Jesus had already forgiven them. The pastor was Christ's representative. He heard my confession in Christ's place. Then, He asked me if I believed that his proclamation and assurance of forgiveness came from our Savior Himself. "Yes, I believe that," I replied.

Then, I heard the assuring words that my sins had been buried with Christ, and because of His death and resurrection, I had been raised to live a new life in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Part of what had just happened seemed rather ordinary, like two people engaged in serious conversation. But mostly, what had just occurred was fantastic. And I knew it.

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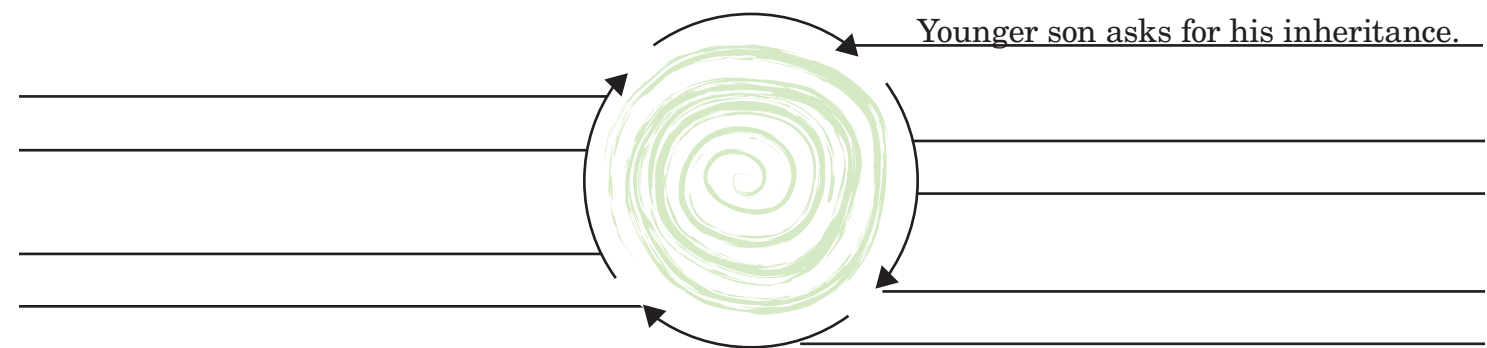
REVIEW

squandered—spent _____ or foolishly
 confession—a written or oral _____ of _____ of a party accused of an _____
 absolution—a _____ (forgiveness) of _____

Parable of the Prodigal Son

Read Luke 15:11-32 and fill in the graphic organizer correctly by placing the following sentences to illustrate the events of the story. The first one is done for you.

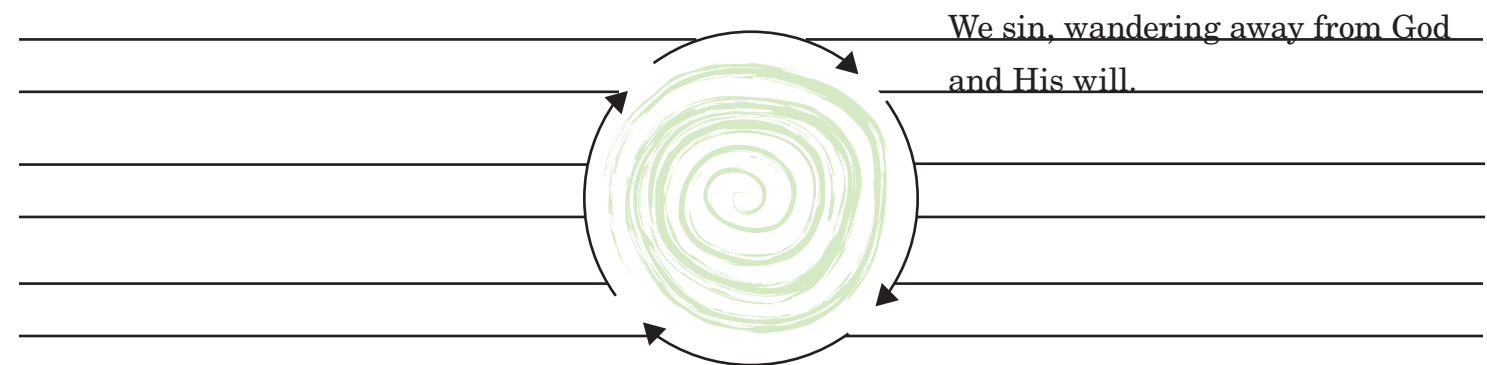
Younger son asks for his inheritance.
 Younger son lives a reckless life, loses his money.
 Younger son gets a job feeding pigs.
 Younger son decides to return to his father as a servant.
 Father welcomes his son and rejoices.



Sin and Restoration

Public Confession and Absolution usually take place at the beginning of Christian worship services. Confessing our sins and receiving the declaration of God's grace and forgiveness, we come into the presence of God once again to receive His gifts as children approaching their loving Father. Place each of the following sentences referring to sin and restoration in the life of believers.

We sin, wandering away from God and His will.
 We come to a recognition of our sins and their consequences.
 We feel sorrow and contrition over the things we have done.
 We confess our sins.
 We receive the assurance that Jesus has forgiven our sins.
 We resolve to begin anew, forgiven and restored.



REMEMBER

When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. . . . I acknowledged my sin to You, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," and You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Psalm 32:3, 5