

AUGUST 2017
† He Just Won't Let You Go! †

You probably don't even realize it! I sure didn't until I took a really good look.
We say things like:

"How are you doing?"
"What did you do on vacation?"
"What have you been up to?"
"What's on your to-do list today?"

Without even realizing it, we focus on doing, acting, performance, achievement. It's to be expected, after all, that's how the world and work, even most families, function. Spoken or unspoken, you just don't measure up unless, well, you measure up, perform, accomplish, achieve, do! No surprise then that this bleeds over into our faith life. Are you showing (translation – doing) your Christian faith? Have you been an obedient child of God? Are you living, acting, talking, thinking, working, parenting, playing, etc. like a Christian is suppose to? No doubt, there is a place for such questions – but never first and foremost or last and most importantly!

If you focus on yourself and your actions, you will always, inevitably reach only one conclusion – *I haven't done enough, good enough, pure enough, right enough.* (If you are truly honest!)

So like any 'good' Christian' you repent! You turn, return, have change of heart. Jesus' words upon the beginning of His public ministry echo in your soul:

"Repent and believe the good news."
Mark 1:15

And we repent. Lord, do we repent! More sin than you can shake a stick at.

We haven't loved God like we should. We haven't loved our neighbor as ourselves. You can get really personal and lay it on thick and really get into it.

"These confessions are good for my soul," you say. The more bad stuff we confess, the worse we feel about ourselves; the worse we feel about ourselves the closer we must be to God, right? We assume by fessing up to wrong-doing we have repaired the bridge between God and us.

We couldn't be more wrong!

*"Restore us to yourself, O Lord,
that we may be restored!"*
Lamentations 5:21 (ESV)

The old saying, *"Confession is good for the soul,"* is only half true! Confession is nothing more than telling the truth – it is to echo God's words, to say back to God what He has already said to you! He gives you the gift of repentance! He pursues you into the pit you have dug and brings you back to Himself! It is a gift received by faith!

With confession is His absolution – *"Your sin is no more!"* It's even better than that. Your sin doesn't just vanish; it appears on the body of the man who bore that sin for you. It is peeled away from you and stuck to the very soul of the One who in your stead, bore it to the cross! Christ's cross crosses the chasm between you and God. He repairs the damage. It is really His confession that is good for your soul: *"I love you! I lay down my life to save yours. I forgive you. I heal you. You are Mine, now and forever!"*

Pastor Bert