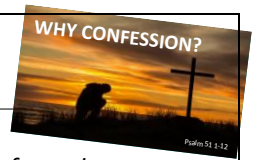


St Paul's Dorking Small Groups – Sunday 18th November

CONFESSION: Psalm 51:1-12 (For reference 2 Samuel 11, 1 John 1:8-10, Galatians 5:1-15)



A DEFINITION OF CHRISTIAN CONFESSION

“An acknowledgement of wrong doing, coupled with a change of behavior, or course of action that stems from the conviction of the heart. Confession can be addressed to; God alone (1 John 1:9), to one’s neighbour who has been wronged (James 5:16), or to a spiritual advisor. (2 Sam 12:13)”

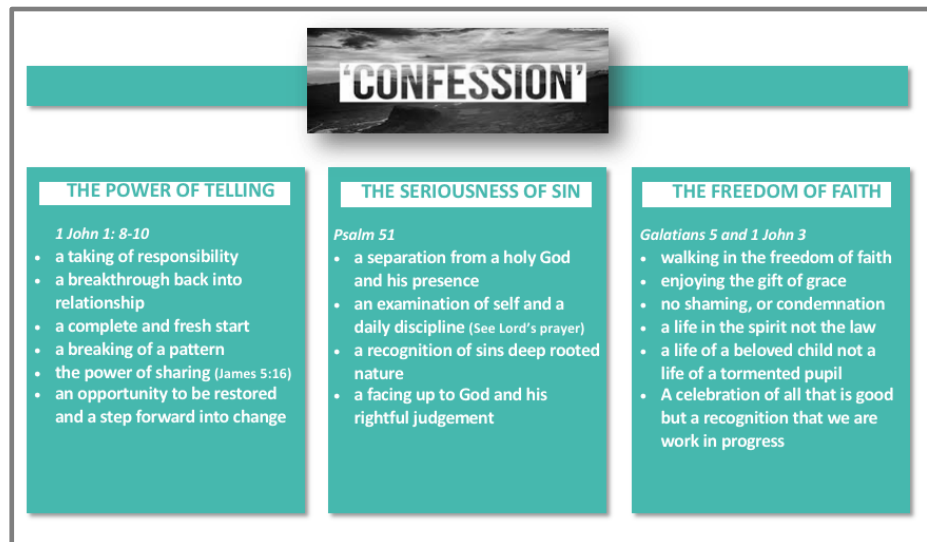
A BACKGROUND TO PSALM 51

Psalm 51 was written by David after not only his adulterous relationship with Bathsheba but his murderous plan to cover it up. The story recounted in 2 Samuel 11 highlights that even great men of God struggle with sin, and that God is bigger than and able to forgive our worst behaviours.

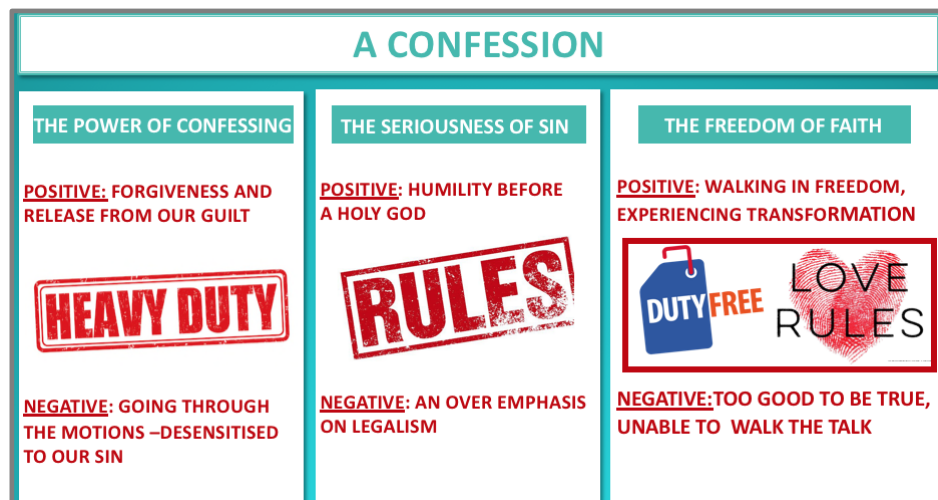
7 PRINCIPLES OF CONFESSION BASED ON PSALM 51

1. **Our sin confronts us** - The record keeps playing “my sin is always before me.” (v.3)
2. **Our sin is against God** - Hurting others is bad, but the nature of sin is that it is against God; “Against you, and you only have I sinned.” (v4a)
3. **Our sin has no room for self-justification** - “You are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge.” (v4b)
4. **Our sin is deep rooted** - It’s not a slip-up but something fundamental to our core; “I have been a sinner from birth ... you desire truth in my inner parts.” (v6)
5. **Our confession produces deep cleansing** - “Cleanse me with hyssop and I will be clean, wash me and I will be whiter than snow.” (v7)
6. **Our confession restores joy and gladness** - Let me hear joy and gladness ... as you blot out my iniquity.” (v8)
7. **Our confession takes us forward** - “Restore me to the joy of your salvation & grant me a willing spirit to sustain me. (v12)

Holding 3 dimensions
of Confession in tension:



Getting the best out
of confession - Positives
and Negatives:



QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS

1. How would you describe your experience of Confession?
2. Discuss the 7 Principles of Confession based on Psalm 51-What strikes you afresh?
3. In your experience, which of the 3 dimensions of Confession do you find most difficult? Can you hold these in tension?
4. Discuss the positives and negatives of Confession (shown above) does this resonate with your experience?
5. What has this week's study shown you most? How could you put this into practise? Share in groups of 3