

## Confession

Our God longs for honesty and holiness within the promise-based relationship God has established with us in Christ. In a culture that avoids talk of sin and culpability, regular prayers of confession foster honesty and openness in our relationship with God. Just as a marriage cannot flourish without honest confession, so our marriage-like relationship with God cannot flourish unless we freely and honestly express all facets of our life: hopes, fears, sins, desires, thanksgiving and praise.

Blessed by God's providence, we don't offer our prayers of confession in a spiritual vacuum with a remote hope that some god or higher power will listen and forgive. We confess sin in the context of the covenant Lord's love shown to us through Jesus Christ. We offer our confession as part of a covenantal relationship. For this reason, the confession and assurance part of a worship service

is often the most explicitly dialogic, alternating between God's words to us and our words to God. We confess sin when prompted by God's gracious invitation. Then we hear the strong declaration of God's forgiveness in Christ. And we respond in joyful gratitude with praise and dedication.

The confession part of the service is like a picture of our relationship with God. Participating in this alternating pattern of God's words and our response each week shapes our faith over time to highlight the tenacity and graciousness of God's covenantal love.

*(Worship Sourcebook, page 18)*



# Living Worship



March 2012

## Confession *I'm Sorry, Lord* Psalm 51

Generous in love—God, give grace!  
Huge in mercy—wipe out my bad record.  
Scrub away my guilt, soak out my sins in your laundry.  
I know how bad I've been; my sins are staring me down.

You're the One I've violated, and you've seen it all,  
seen the full extent of my evil.  
You have all the facts before you;  
whatever you decide about me is fair.  
I've been out of step with you for a long time,  
in the wrong since before I was born.  
What you're after is truth from the inside out.  
Enter me, then; conceive a new, true life.

Soak me in your laundry and I'll come out clean,  
scrub me and I'll have a snow-white life.  
Tune me in to foot-tapping songs,  
set these once-broken bones to dancing.  
Don't look too close for blemishes,  
give me a clean bill of health.  
God, make a fresh start in me,  
shape a Genesis week from the chaos of my life.  
Don't throw me out with the trash, or fail to breathe holiness in me.

Bring me back from gray exile, put a fresh wind in my sails!  
Give me a job teaching rebels your ways  
so the lost can find their way home.  
Commute my death sentence, God, my salvation God,  
and I'll sing anthems to your life-giving ways.  
Unbutton my lips, dear God; I'll let loose with your praise.

Going through the motions doesn't please you,  
a flawless performance is nothing to you.  
I learned God-worship when my pride was shattered.  
Heart-shattered lives ready for love  
don't for a moment escape God's notice.

Make Zion the place you delight in, repair Jerusalem's broken-down walls.  
Then you'll get real worship from us, acts of worship small and large,  
Including all the bulls they can heave onto your altar!

*Psalm 51 The Message*

*Daily Scripture Readings to help us Confess "I'm Sorry, Lord"*

# March 2012

				1 <i>Luke 7:36-50</i>	2 <i>Isaiah 6:1-7</i>	3 <i>I John 1:8-10</i>
4 <i>Malachi 2:1-9</i>	5 <i>James 5:13-16</i>	6 <i>Proverbs 28:13</i>	7 <i>Psalms 130</i>	8 <i>Hebrews 4:14-16</i>	9 <i>Eccles 4:20</i>	10 <i>Lev 5:1-6</i>
11 <i>Malachi 2:10-16</i>	12 <i>II Chron 6:22-23</i>	13 <i>Acts 3:17-21</i>	14 <i>Ezra 9</i>	15 <i>Ezra 10:1-6</i>	16 <i>Mark 1:1-8</i>	17 <i>Psalms 139:23,24</i>
18 <i>Malachi 2:17-3:5</i>	19 <i>Eph 2:1-22</i>	20 <i>Psalms 39</i>	21 <i>Hebrews 10:19-25</i>	22 <i>Psalms 6</i>	23 <i>Nehemiah 1:4-11</i>	24 <i>Nehemiah 9:29-37</i>
25 <i>Malachi 3:6-12</i>	26 <i>Genesis 50:15-21</i>	27 <i>Luke 11:1-4</i>	28 <i>Romans 5:1-8</i>	29 <i>Romans 6:1-14</i>	30 <i>Isaiah 1:18-20</i>	31 <i>Psalms 32</i>

**Prayer of Confession**

**Healer of Our Every Ill**

Lord, You come to us, but we do not recognize You;  
 You call, but we do not follow;  
 You command, but we do not obey,  
 You bless us, but we do not thank You.  
**Please forgive and help us.**

Lord, You accept us, but we do not accept others;  
 You forgive us, but we do not forgive those who wrong us;  
 You love us, but we do not love our neighbors.  
**Please forgive and help us.**

Lord, you showed us how to carry out Your mission,  
 But we still insist on our own;  
 You identified Yourself with outcasts, the needy and the poor,  
 But we do not bother to find out what is happening to them;  
 You suffered and died for the sake of all,  
 But we do not give up our comfortable lives.

**Please forgive and help us,  
 Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.**

*From Worship Sourcebook, pg 93*

Healer of our every ill, light of each tomorrow,  
 Give us peace beyond our fear and hope beyond our sorrow.

You who know our fears and sadness,  
 Grace us with your peace and gladness,  
 Spirit of all comfort, fill our hearts.

In the pain and joy beholding,  
 how your grace is still unfolding.  
 Give us all your vision, God of love.

Give us strength to love each other,  
 Every sister, every brother.  
 Spirit of all kindness, be our guide.

You who know each thought and feeling,  
 Teach us all your way of healing.  
 Spirit of compassion, fill each heart.

Healer of our every ill,  
 Light of each tomorrow,  
 Give us peace beyond our fear  
 And hope beyond our sorrow.