

Thesis: One of the ways we express our faith in Jesus is verbal confession. The apostle Paul calls this the “good confession.” The good confession was made by Jesus, is made by his disciples, and is lived throughout Christian lives.

Support: 1 Timothy 6:11-14

1. Greeting

- a. Good morning!
- b. Thank Dan Anderson.

2. Introduction

- a. In **Matthew 16**, that apostle records an interesting dialogue between Jesus and his disciples. Starting in **16:13**, he writes:

¹³ Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" ¹⁴ And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." ¹⁵ He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" ¹⁶ Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." ¹⁷ And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven." ¹⁸ And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. ¹⁹ I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." ²⁰ Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ.

- i. At first, Jesus asked his disciples about popular opinion of the people.
 1. Who do people say that I am?
 2. By the disciples' responses, we see that the people held divergent views of who he was.
 - a. Some thought he was John the Baptist.
 - b. Others thought he was Elijah.
 - c. Others thought he was Jeremiah or one of the other great prophets.
 - i. The people thought he was a great man, a prophet from God.
 - ii. But their opinion of him fell far short of reality and the answer Jesus was looking for.
 3. We see the same thing yet today.
 - a. Followers of Islam deny Jesus was the Son of God. Rather, like these ancient Jews, they believe him to be merely a prophet.
 - b. Jews of today deny Jesus was Messiah or the Son of God.
 - c. The Bahai faith lumps Jesus in with Buddha, Mohammad, Krishna, etc. as one of nine manifestation of God.
 - d. Jehovah's Witnesses believe Jesus was a created being.
 - e. People of today, like those ancient Jews who heard and saw Jesus, have wildly different views about who he is and who he was.



- ii. After hearing the ideas of others, Jesus turns his attention to the apostles.
 - I. These men had been with him for more than two years.
 - a. They saw the miracles.
 - b. They heard the preaching and teaching.
 - c. They observed his sinless perfection, day by day.
 - d. They initially followed him, because they thought he was the Messiah.
 - e. But he wasn't fulfilling their expectations regarding the Messiah, a worldly, political ruler.
 - 2. Jesus was giving them a gut check.
 - a. The people did not understand who he was.
 - b. Would his most intimate followers still believe in him?
 - c. He asked, "But who do you say that I am?"
 - iii. Simon Peter had the right answer.
 - I. He replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."
 - a. The Christ refers to his Jesus' office; he is the Messiah, the anointed one, son of David, the long anticipated delivered.
 - b. The Son of the living God acknowledges his divinity.
 - i. Peter confessed Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God.
 - iv. According to Jesus, he would build his church, his spiritual kingdom, on the bedrock truth just confessed by Peter – that he was the Christ, the Son of the living God.
 - I. Brothers and sisters and friends, what you think about Jesus matters.
 - a. What you say about Jesus matters.
 - b. You need to understand and believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God.
 - c. Moreover, you must be willing to confess this belief, this faith, before others.
 - i. The scriptures refer to this confession as the good confession.
 - ii. The facts confessed are the rock on which Christ's church is built.
3. **If you have your Bibles, please turn them to our primary text this morning - I Timothy 6:11-14. Let us notice together what the apostle Paul writes to the young preacher Timothy concerning the good confession. I Timothy 6:11-14:**
- a. ¹¹ But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. ¹² Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. ¹³ I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, ¹⁴ to keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ,
4. **You'll notice within these four verses, that Paul refers to the good confession twice. I submit to you three main points about the good confession.**
5. **First, Jesus made the good confession.**



- a. **6:13**, "...Christ Jesus, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession."
- i. Jesus made the good confession before Pontius Pilate.
 - ii. Let me start by saying, that the Greek word translated as "before" could be translated as "before" or "in the time of."
 1. If the sense of this is "in the time of Pontius Pilate," notice what is recorded in **Mark 14:61-62**:
 - a. ⁶¹ But he remained silent and made no answer. Again the high priest asked him, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" ⁶² And Jesus said, "I am, and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven."
 - i. In the time of Pilate, in fact, right before Jesus was delivered over to him, Jesus confessed that he was the Christ, the Son of God – the good confession.
 2. The gospel accounts do not record him making or confirming this exact statement in presence of Pontius Pilate.
 - a. That might be because of their brevity; the gospel accounts don't include every single word Jesus said on every occasion.
 - b. Or it might be because he acknowledged essentially the same thing to Pilate without using these exact words.
 - i. Pilate asks Jesus in **Matthew 27:11**, "Are you the King of the Jews?"
 - ii. Jesus responds, "You have said so" (**Matthew 27:11**).
 1. Although literally precise, the thrust of Jesus' response is lost in the ESV.
 2. Jesus answered with a Hebrew idiom meaning, "it is just as you say, to be sure, certainly" (Thayer).
 3. Jesus confessed to Pilate that he was the King of Jews; he confessed that he was the long-awaited Messiah or Christ.
 - iii. In any case, Jesus made the good confession before or in the time of Pontius Pilate. Jesus confessed he was the Christ, the Son of God.
 - iv. Furthermore, God the Father also acknowledged Jesus as his Son.
 1. At Jesus' baptism, "a voice from heaven said, 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased'" (**Matthew 3:17**).
 2. At the transfiguration, God the Father said the same thing adding, "listen to him" (**Matthew 17:5**).
 3. God the Father also confessed Jesus as His Son.
- b. Jesus and his heavenly Father both made the good confession.
6. **Second, Christians make the good confession.**
- a. **1 Timothy 6:12** tells us Timothy "made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses."
- i. Moreover, the confession was tied to the eternal life to which Timothy was called.



- I. Most scholars conclude, therefore, that Timothy confessed Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God at the time of his baptism.
2. Prior to being baptized, Timothy made the good confession.
- ii. The Ethiopian eunuch also made the good confession prior to his baptism.

Notice **Acts 8:35-38**:

1. ³⁵ Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus. ³⁶ And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?" ³⁷ And Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he replied, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." ³⁸ And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him.
 - a. After noticing water, the eunuch inquired about baptism.
 - i. So Philip asked him to confess his faith in Christ Jesus.
 - ii. He responded with the good confession.
 - I. He simply stated, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."
 - b. You'll notice in your Bibles that there is a textual question regarding verse 37, the verse containing the good confession.
 - i. Some believe the verse to be authentic in the original text.
 - ii. Others believe it was added sometime later by a scribe to reflect common practice in the first and second centuries.
 - iii. In either case, the earliest Christians made the good confession prior to baptism to evidence their faith.
- iii. That seems to be what Luke is implying in **Acts 22:16**. Here Ananais is speaking to Saul.
 1. He said, "¹⁶ And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.'
 - a. Brother Everett Ferguson writes regarding this verse, "Baptism is a 'calling on the name' of the Lord...The reference is likely to the confession of faith made at the baptism" (*The Church of Christ*, p. 180-181).
- iv. This is what the apostle Paul has in mind in **Romans 10:9-10**:
 1. ⁹ because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.
 - a. The mouth confesses the belief that is in the heart, namely that Jesus is the:
 - i. Christ.
 - ii. Son of God.
 - iii. Lord.



- I. These three confessions are three different ways of saying the same thing.
- b. At the point of baptism, Christians make the good confession as evidence of their faith.

7. Third, Christians live the good confession.

- a. In **I Timothy 6:11-14**, Paul reminds Timothy of his confession so that it may exert continuing positive influence in his life.
 - i. Confessing Jesus as Christ.
 - 1. Confessing him as the Son of God.
 - 2. Confessing him as Lord.
 - a. Ought to mean something.
 - i. It ought to mean something on the day you obey the gospel.
 - ii. It ought to mean something on each and every subsequent day of your life.
 - iii. If it doesn't continue to influence you, something is wrong.
 - ii. Paul tells Timothy and he tells us:
 - 1. Flee the evils mentioned in **I Timothy 6:3-10**.
 - 2. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness.
 - 3. Fight the good fight of the faith.
 - 4. Take hold of the eternal life to which we were called.
 - 5. Keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.
 - a. Jesus Christ and our continued confession of him motivate us to live the lives we ought to live.
 - b. Brother David Lipscomb wrote long ago, "Faith in God and the courage to confess Christ is just as essential to salvation at every step through life down to death itself as they are at the beginning."
 - iii. We must always confess Jesus as Christ and to live he's Lord of our lives, no matter what.
 - 1. Jesus says in **Matthew 10:32-33**, "³² So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, ³³ but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.
 - a. Brothers and sisters, you may have given the good confession at your baptism, but if you deny Jesus in word or deed, he is going to deny you to his Father in heaven.
 - b. Words have meaning, and the confession must have meaning throughout your life.
- b. In the first and second centuries, there lived an elder of the church at Smyrna named Polycarp.
 - i. Listen to these words written about Polycarp.

Polycarp, the venerable bishop of Smyrna, hearing that persons were seeking for him, escaped, but was discovered by a child. After feasting the



guards who apprehended him, he desired an hour in prayer, which being allowed, he prayed with such fervency, that his guards repented that they had been instrumental in taking him. He was, however, carried before the proconsul, condemned, and burnt in the market place.

The proconsul then urged him, saying, "Swear, and I will release thee; -- reproach Christ."

Polycarp answered, "Eighty and six years have I served him, and he never once wronged me; how then shall I blaspheme my King, Who hath saved me?" At the stake, to which he was only tied, but not nailed as usual, as he assured them he should stand immovable, the flames, on their kindling the fagots, encircled his body, like an arch, without touching him, and the executioner, on seeing this, was ordered to pierce him with a sword when so great a quantity of blood flowed out as extinguished the fire. But his body, at the instigation of the enemies of the Gospel, especially Jews, was ordered to be consumed in the pile, and the request of his friends, who wished to give it Christian burial, rejected. They nevertheless collected his bones and as much of his remains as possible, and caused them to be decently interred.

—Fox's Book of Martyrs

1. Polycarp was asked to deny Christ, and his life would be spared.
 - a. Instead, he confessed Christ, and he was burned at the stake.
- c. A Christian must live the good confession. He must live it on the day he initially makes it and on each successive day of his live, even if his confession costs him his physical life.

8. Conclusion

- a. Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."
 - i. This is the good confession, and its bedrock truth is what the church of Christ is founded on.
 1. Jesus made the good confession of himself.
 2. Likewise, Christians make the good confession at their baptism.
 3. Moreover, Christians live the good confession in word and deed throughout their lives, even if it brings on physical death.

9. Invitation

- a. Notice please what Matthew records immediately after Simon Peter made the good confession.
 - i. He writes in **Matthew 16:21**, "²¹ From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised."
 1. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, had a mission; he came to this earth to die for the sins of humanity.
 2. Each of us can enjoy salvation from our sins through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
 - a. That's the gospel; that's the free gift from God.



- b. If you are here this morning and you have not yet reached out your hands and taken a hold of this gift, we urge you do so today.
- c. You accept it by faith. Faith expressed by:
 - i. Repentance.
 - ii. Confession.
 - iii. Immersion.
- d. At the point of immersion, the scripture says your sins are forgiven, you are given the gift of the Holy Spirit, and you are added to the body of the saved, the church.
 - i. You arise out of the waters of baptism a new creation.
- e. If you are ready to obey the gospel this morning or you have a care you'd like to bring before the church, won't you please come forward as we stand and sing.
- f. Let us stand and sing.

