

# Ugly Feet

## Two Confessions of True Faith

September 24, 2023

Today we're talking about the two confessions of true faith!



Two Sundays back, we covered the sometimes *unpleasant* and *unappealing* process of **warming up to righteousness** to restore life, and **building up belief beyond the shivering demons** of James 2:19. So we focused on **bowing to Jesus' identity and authority and mission**. And apparently I missed my opportunity. Because after 2nd service, Chris Vargas comes up and says, "Why didn't you reveal the acronym?" And I said, "What acronym?" And he said, "**Identity, Authority, and Mission**." And I said, "I am?" And he said, "**I AM!**" And I whisper-shouted, "Wait everybody ... the sermon's not finished! There's an acronym ..."

Today's question: **Are you a believer, or a confessor, or a friend?**

Cuz we can *only be one* of these three. Every congregation has four categories: 1) **Believers who don't profess** (their faith); 2) **Professors who don't believe** (as they profess); 3) **Believers who profess** (what they believe); and 4) **Skeptics who don't profess what they don't believe**. Which is Jesus' favorite group? #3! These followers He calls friends.

[Jesus said] "You are My friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from My Father I have made known to you ... and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last." – John 15:14-16 NIV

Now here's where it gets interesting: **Which is His 2nd favorite group? #4!** Remember His wish?

"You [**#1 and #2**] are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either cold or hot. So, because you are lukewarm ... I will spit you out of My mouth." – Revelation 3:15-16 NAB

Jesus openly expressed His contempt and disdain for hypocrites, but when ...

[The Pharisees] complained to His disciples, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" Jesus answered them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have ... [come to call] sinners to repentance." ... "and you say, 'Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.'" – Luke 5:31-32; 7:34 NIV

Well, they got one out of three! So, if He came as a friend to sinners and skeptics – who suffer in the darkness down here, what do you suppose is the "fruit that will last" that He appoints His faithful friends to bear on His behalf? You see, **there are two confessions of true faith**. First off:

If we *claim* to have *fellowship* with Him yet *walk in the darkness*, [down here] we *lie* and do not *live by the truth*. ... [But] If we *confess* our *sins*, He is *faithful* and *just* and will *forgive* us our *sins* and *purify* us from *all* unrighteousness. – 1 John 1:5-9 NIV

That's the *confession* we're all familiar with. But there's also one called **The Good Confession** or **The Word of Faith**, wherein we don't confess our *sin* so much as our *Savior*. As Paul reminds *Timothy*:

[You] made the *good confession* in the presence of *many witnesses*. – 1 Timothy 6:12 NAS

[Having written that] The *Word [of faith]* is near you; [if] it is in your *mouth and in your heart*," that is, the *Word of faith* we are *proclaiming*: [from Deut. 30:14, where it says, "The word is ... in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it"] that if you *confess* with your *mouth*, "Jesus is Lord," and *believe* in your *heart* that God raised Him from the dead, you will be *saved*. For it is *with your heart* that you *believe* and are *justified*, [freed from the *guilt of sin – if you're sin'cere*] and it is *with your mouth* that you *confess* [what's in your heart] and are *saved*. As the *Scripture [Is 28:16]* says, [serving as *Paul's summation* for confessing what we believe] "Anyone who *trusts* in Him will never be *put to shame*." – Romans 10:8-11 NIV

Because it isn't *belief alone* that *saves*. Even the *shuddering demons* believe. Nor is it a matter of simply *saying* the *right things*. **Salvation comes to anyone who trusts in Jesus**. And **the only way to trust is to act on what you believe**, and do what Jesus asks us to. Because **a trusting heart is eager to make those two true confessions**. One mostly *private*. One mostly *public*. Because:

Everyone who *calls* on the name of the *Lord* will be *saved*. ["Yay!" But] How, then, can they call on the One they have not *believed* in? ["Um"] And how can they *believe* in the One of whom they have not *heard*? ["Well"] And how can they *hear* without *someone preaching* to them? And how can they *preach* unless they are *sent*? As it is written, "How *beautiful* are the *feet* of those who bring good news!" – Romans 10:13-15 NIV



Compared to the *ugly feet* of *non-confessors*, and *professors* who *walk in darkness*. "But, *who's* being "*sent*" and *who's* doing the *sending*?" Well ...

[Jesus said] "As the *Father* has *sent* Me, I am *sending* you." – John 20:21 NIV



"Oh." So **how beautiful are your feet?** Many of the *religious rulers* of Jesus' day *believed* in their *heart* that He *was* the *Christ/Messiah*. For instance ...



There was a man of the *Pharisees* named *Nicodemus*, a member of the *Jewish ruling council*. He came to Jesus at *night* [talk about *walking in darkness*] and said, "Rabbi, we *know* You are a teacher who has come from *God*." [Trouble was: *ugly feet*] – John 3:1-2 NIV

The [same ruling council of the] Jews had already agreed that if *anyone* *confessed* Him to be *Christ*, he was to be put out [as in *kicked out*] of the *synagogue*. – John 9:22 NAS

[So] Among the [70-member council of] *rulers* many *believed* in Him, [as *Christ/Messiah* (like the *demons* did)] but because of the *Pharisees* [who *did not*] they *did not* [publically] *confess* Him, [as *Christ*] lest they should be put out of the *synagogue*; [and so, even though they *believed* in Him they *shuddered* at the thought of *publically confessing* Him] for they loved the praise of *men* more than the praise of *God*. – John 12:42-43 NKJ

They *knew* it was most likely *true* – they just wouldn't *stake* their *life* on it. But until we *do*, our *faith's* not so *true*. I said the *one good thing* about *demons* is their *theology* on *Jesus' identity*; cuz they came out *crying out*, "You are the *Christ!*" (Lk 4:41) So *add this* to that *list*: **even the demons were willing to publically confess Jesus as the Christ!** And I hear *their feet* are like *hooves!* So, how beautiful *are your feet?* Cuz **it has a lot to do with whose approval you most desire.** It's *common* to be *afraid* of losing *popularity* or *position* (cuz you *might*) when it comes to our *profession* of the *Good Confession* of our *Savior* among our *peers*. Which is why *Jesus exhorts* and *warns* that:

"Whoever *confesses* Me before *men*, him I will *also confess* before *My Father* who is in heaven. But whoever *denies* Me **[down here]** ... him I will *also deny* before *My Father*" **[up there]** – Matthew 10:32-33 NKJ



But, don't get those *frightened, believing Pharisees* wrong; **they loved the praise of God ... they just loved the praise of their unbelieving peers a bit more.** So they kept their *true thoughts* and *feelings* to themselves. But **it's not called the Good Thought or the Good Feeling; it's the Good Confession.** And I *like* that *word*; because the *best way* to *share* the *Good News* of our *Savior*, is by *confessing* the *faults* and *flaws* and *fears* from which we're being *saved!* **Jesus' greatest proofs are His works-in-progress that He's producing.** So these *fearful leaders* tried *believing* without *confessing*; but, *speaking* of *demons*, there's a *wild story* about some *foolish leaders* who tried *confessing* without *believing!*



[The Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest] tried to invoke the *name* of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. **[But they refused to call Him "Lord", so]** They would say, "In the *name* of Jesus, whom *Paul* preaches, I command you to come out." ... One day the evil spirit *answered* them, "Jesus I know, and I know about *Paul*, but *who are you?*" **[Great question! Not a friend of the Friend of sinners]** Then the man who had the evil spirit ... gave them such a *beating* that they *ran out* of the house *naked* and *bleeding*. **[It's comical because the evil spirit has more belief in Jesus than those trying to cast it out!]** ... *Many* of those who believed now came and openly confessed their *evil deeds*. A number who had *practiced sorcery* brought their *scrolls together* and burned them *publicly* ... the *value* of the *scrolls* ... came to *fifty thousand* **[silver]** drachmas. **In this [very public] way** the *Word* of the *Lord* *spread widely* and *grew in power*. – Acts 19:13-20 NIV



Because **the most powerful way to share is to show the impact of the Lord in your life.** In *stark contrast* to this *dark world*, **our sincerity and transparency and authenticity demonstrates our trust in Jesus' identity and authority and mission.** And – you *ready for this?!* The **acronym** is *Iam!*

Ever know someone who *practiced sorcery*? Back in college, I ran children's shoes at Bullock's in Sherman Oaks. And the lady running children's clothing, next to me, was a self-proclaimed *white witch*. Like *Glinda*. I really *enjoy* being around *unbelievers*. **I'm not threatened by unbelief, or offended by worldly ways.** No. Instead, **I'm curious and concerned.** And *baby*, if you're a *practicing witch*, I got *questions!* So I *peppered* her, cuz I *had* to know *what she believed* and *why*. And if she *made potions* and *did spells* and *said incantations* and *wiggled her nose* like on *Bewitched*.

And at some point *she* peppered *me*. And, *given* the opportunity, **I gladly shared the salt of my faults and flaws and fears and Savior. Like a friend.** I was only there a few months. And I didn't see any results. However, when I told her that I was *leaving*, she told *me* that I was one of her *only real friends*. And she asked me why I had to *go*. So, to *lighten* the moment, I *teasingly* said, "The Lord told me my work here is done." And she starts *crying* and says, "I prayed last night, for the first time, and asked God to give me whatever it is you have." Then, *I* started *crying*.

You see, **it's vital that we verbalize our faith.** Cuz *that's* what *makes* it *our* faith! "Scripture says, 'Anyone who trusts in Him will never be put to shame.'" (Rom 10:11) Oh, *people* will *try*. Jesus said:

"If the world hates you, [just] keep in mind that it hated Me first." – John 15:18 NIV

Oddly *comforting*. Cuz, try as they *might*, **I can't be put to shame for trusting the sun to come up, the tide to go out, and the Lord to live in my heart!** Plus, **sharing what Jesus is doing in your life isn't an option, it's an assignment!** Because the *responsibility* of *salvation* is to *pass* the salt.

**So, how beautiful are your feet?** I can *tell* you what *size shoe* you *need*, but **your true foot appeal is between you and those in search of a Savior.** Paul was mostly quoting Isaiah, who wrote:

[How beautiful] are the feet of Him who 1) brings Good News, who 2) proclaims peace, who 3) brings glad tidings of good things, who 4) proclaims salvation – Isaiah 52:7 NKJ



That's what we in the *biz* call a *size 4!* But did you notice that *Paul's "feet"* are slightly *larger* than *Isaiah's "feet"*. **Paul changes "the feet of HIM" to "the feet of THOSE"**. Know *why?* Because *Isaiah* is referring to the *feet* of the *Christ* – whose name, *Jesus*, in *Hebrew* is *Yeshua* (lit. "Salvation"). And **how beautiful are the pierced feet of Him who first proclaimed the peace and goodness of Yeshua.** Which the *Father* sent *Yeshua* himself *down* to *do*; and He *did*; and *now* sends out His *faithful friends* to *follow* in His *footsteps*.



**So how beautiful are your feet?** It's got nothing to do with *aesthetics*. This old *boat* ain't much to *look* at, but if it *risked* itself to *bring* relief and to *rescue* you from *certain death*, you'd later say something like, "That ol' hunk of junk was the most *beautiful* thing I'd ever seen!" Because **true beauty is based on the life that it brings.** And *Jesus' sandaled ol' soles* were quite likely *calloused*, and *ultimately, eternally scarred*. But, according to the OT prophet *Nahum*, these beauties are *truly* in the eye of the *beholder*.



[Behold] the feet of Him who brings good news, who publishes peace! – Nahum 1:15 ESV

**Jesus is not only the Author of salvation,** (Heb 5:9) **He's far and away the most successfully published Author in human history!** The world knows *Jesus*, and it knows *about Paul*, but **who are you? Hopefully a friend.** Because you know why He *leaves* us down here *after* we're *saved*? To make those *two true confessions*. Cuz **there are two things we can't do up there: sin; and share our heart with friends who don't yet know Him.** And He *sure* as *heaven* didn't leave us *here* to *sin!*

**So let's beat feet and bear the fruit that'll last for all eternity!**

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Father God, thank You for loving me in spite of my sin; forgive me and cleanse me by the sacrifice of Your Son, my Savior; and free me and lead me by Your Spirit and Word, as I seek to trust and follow Jesus Christ, as the Lord of my life. Amen.