



ENTER God's presence

Psalm 38 selected verses

- ¹ Lord, do not rebuke me in your anger
or discipline me in your wrath,
³ Because of your wrath there is no health in my body;
there is no soundness in my bones because of my sin
⁴ My guilt has overwhelmed me
Like a burden too heavy to bear.
⁹ All my longings lie open before you, Lord;
My sighing is not hidden from you.
¹⁰ My heart pounds, my strength fails me;
Even the light has gone from my eyes.
¹⁷ For I am about to fall,
And my pain is ever with me.
¹⁸ I confess my iniquity;
I am troubled by my sin.
²¹ Lord, do not forsake me;
Do not be far from me, my God.
²² Come quickly to help me,
My Lord and Saviour.

- **Pray:** Lord God, we come to you, like the psalmist, aware of our brokenness and sin. And like the psalmist we pray, come quickly to help us our Lord and our Saviour. Thank you that you always leave the door open for those who wish to return to you. Help us now to know more of your word to us as we gather now in, Jesus name, Amen.



SHARE life together

1. What are your highs and lows for this past week?
2. What is the most surprising confession you have ever heard?
3. Why do you think it is sometimes so hard to 'fess up' or own up to the truth?



LISTEN attentively

Week beginning:
Monday 15th July 2024

Worship series:
Fully Engaged
#3 – in Repentance



VERSE for the week

Go, proclaim this message
toward the north;

“Return faithless Israel,’
declares the Lord, ‘I will frown
on you no longer, for I am
faithful,’ declares the Lord,
‘I will not be angry forever.’”

Key Verses: Jeremiah 3:12

Full Text: Jeremiah 3:11-15, 7:1-15



REMEMBER this week

**A world without
God leaves no
place to lay down
your guilt. Jesus
says, ‘give it to
me’.**

These days the word confession is best understood by the world at large as a statement admitting guilt or wrongdoing. The world's 2 biggest contexts for understanding confession are from the legal and justice systems where the police might garner a confession from a criminal during an interrogation interview, and most of the time this understanding comes more from Hollywood and television than any real life experience with the legal system, or otherwise it comes from the Roman Catholic practice of private confession, which again most people only know about from movies and TV. But traditionally a 'confession' was just a statement or public declaration of the truth. People confessed their love for one another, people confessed their faith in the creeds that the church still uses today. Read **Jeremiah 3:11-15 and 7:1-15** in your own Bible or online at Bible Gateway [HERE](#) and, as you read, pay attention and see if you think there might be a difference between confession and repentance.

4. **Try to summarise this text in your own words.**
5. **What verse/concept/teaching in this reading caught your attention and what was challenging/confronting/comforting about it for you?**
6. **Why do you think God spends so much time in chapter 3 reminding the people of Israel of who he is, what he has done, and what he is like? How might that be important when it comes to repentance?**
7. **Looking closely at part from chapter 7, do you think God is calling them to confess or to repent, what do you think the difference might be?**



Confession is part of repentance. Confession involves the declaration and recognition of wrongdoing. It's making a statement of the reality of our sin and facing the fact that we have messed up our relationship with God. But that's just the first step. Too often too many Christians stop here. Acknowledging that you have done something wrong does not necessarily require you to change your behaviour. Repentance, on the other hand, is about turning away from the wrong path we have taken and returning to God and his way. Repentance involves a change of heart and behaviour. Look again at Jeremiah 3:12 and 14, God calls Israel to 'return' to him. Not just admit they were wrong and remain distant from him in their sin, but to turn their back on their sin and return to him as his beloved.

8. **How do you feel about this distinction between repentance and confession? Do you think the distinction is helpful or not?**

Our ability to confess or repent is largely determined by our capacity to trust the person or authority who will sit in judgement over us. God reminds the Israelites and us, that he is faithful, that he does not remain angry forever. This is not often the kind of experience people have when they confess or repent of their wrongdoings to other people.

9. **How does knowing God as a personal and loving Heavenly Father, who offers grace and forgiveness to those who repent and believe make you able to come to God and repent of your mistakes and sins?**
10. **How might this feel different for someone who has not had a personal relationship with God?**
11. **When it comes to speaking to non-Christians or seekers, about Christian faith, would you start by asking them to recognise and repent of their sin or help them to get to know a loving and caring Heavenly Father?**



MAKE IT REAL:

There is no denying that real repentance is an important part of being a disciple of Jesus. Most of the time people in the New Testament ask, “what must I/we do to be saved, the apostles reply with the words, “repent and be baptised”. But to be fully engaged in repentance is to have a daily practice of repentance. Each day we turn to Christ and acknowledge our need of him as Lord and Saviour. Each day we have to turn our backs on the mistakes of the day before and ask God to put our feet back on the path he has marked out for us. However, sometimes we have things that are hard for us to acknowledge even to ourselves and we can be tempted to try and hide them even from God. The best remedy for that is accountability.

12. **If there is something that you have had difficulty repenting of in the past, consider finding a close friend, maybe a member of your life group or perhaps even your local pastor and ask them to listen as you unload the guilt of those things you have not been able to repent of easily. Who might that person be for you?**
13. **Daily repentance is a bit like daily physical exercise, the more you do it the healthier you become. How might you include some kind of daily repentance in your devotional routines?**
14. **What things make it difficult for you to confess and repent before God? How might you begin to work at overcoming those things this week?**

Plan your weekly devotions or [download the Church Central app](#) for the daily **LifeWay Devotions**



PRAY intentionally

- **Praise the Father**, for showing his love and faithfulness to us and inviting us to repent of our sin.
- **Thank Jesus** for his act of love and mercy which enables us to offload our sin and guilt at the cross.
- **Thank God** for his law which acts as a mirror to show us our sin and need of repentance.
- **Ask the Holy Spirit** to give you wisdom to see your need of repentance and give you the confidence to come back to God.
- Pray for your city – whether it be Newcastle, Sydney, Western Sydney, Illawarra, Kampong Thom or wherever you may live...pray that God would give you a love for your city and a desire to live out the call he has given you to share Christ with your city.
- Pray for the upcoming Alpha course in Newcastle and Western Sydney, that God would use these discovery courses to draw more people into a living relationship with Jesus.



BLESS one another

You might like to address one person in your group and make the sign of the cross on their forehead or on the palm of their hand as you say...

[Name], May you always turn to God and find your life in him, Amen.