

January 21, 2018

A Prayer of Obedient Faith

Daniel 9:4-8, 15-19

In the services of Word and Table found in *The United Methodist Hymnal*, we collectively state the following confession:

“Merciful God,
we confess that we have not loved you with our whole heart.
We have failed to be an obedient church.
We have not done your will,
we have broken your law,
we have rebelled against your love,
we have not loved our neighbors,
and we have not heard the cry of the needy.”¹

We confess our individual sin as well as our corporate sin as a church and as people of Christ. This confession reminds us that we are not always aware of the sin we commit as individuals or as a people. The words of Daniel 9:4-8 echo many of the thoughts in the Word and Table confession. In our lesson, we learn that “recognition of and reparation for our sin affects all of our relationships: with God, with others, and with ourselves.”² Sin damages relationships. God gives us the gifts of confession, repentance, pardon, and reconciliation to close the deep gaps in our relationships that sin leaves behind.

The student book author writes, “We rely on God’s grace for forgiveness and for ultimate freedom from the bondage to sin’s power.”³ Our Word and Table services offer this pardon: “Christ died for us while we were yet sinners; that proves God’s love toward us. In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!”⁴ Sometimes we feel overwhelmed by individual and/or corporate sin, and we cannot see a way out. It is comforting to find guidance in Scripture and church resources for confession, repentance, pardon, and reconciliation.

1. Which phrases of the confession printed in the Word and Table services ring true for you? Which phrases do not resonate with you? What would you add to the confession?
2. How does sin damage our relationship with God and our relationships with other people? How do confession and repentance help to repair those relationships?
3. How does God’s grace help us to accept and extend forgiveness? When has Scripture or church resources offered you guidance for confession, repentance, pardon, or reconciliation?

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¹*The United Methodist Hymnal*; pages 8, 12.

²From *Adult Bible Studies*, Winter 2017-2018, by Chuck Aaron (Cokesbury, 2017); page 61.

³From *Adult Bible Studies*; page 61.

⁴*Hymnal*; page 12.