



Let Us Hold Fast Our Confession



**Twelve Steps to a Good Year
(Part 5)**
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again as we draw near to the close of the first week of this new year. I trust that you've made a good start into the new year and that you've already begun to benefit from my special series of the new year messages: "Twelve Steps to a Good Year."

The special purpose of this series of messages is to equip you with an attitude and an outlook that will enable you to appropriate the fullness of God's provision and God's blessing in the year that lies ahead. You see, so much depends on these two things, your attitude and your outlook, as you move on into all that God has planned for you in this new year.

This series is based on the epistle to the Hebrews. Twelve times in this epistle the writer says "let us." These words indicate a resolution, a decision, but one that we need to

make together with our fellow believers. Taken together, they constitute twelve scriptural New Year's resolutions.

Let me briefly mention the two first steps that I've spoken of in my previous talks. The first step, the first "let us," is Hebrews 4:1: "Let us fear." Surprising at first, but I believe I've shown you why that was appropriate, because of the particular spiritual condition of those Hebrew believers, and I added that, in many cases, professing Christians today are in the same kind of spiritual condition and desperately need that first resolution, "Let us fear."

Then the second "let us" is in Hebrews 4:11: "Let us, therefore, be diligent." I believe that the right kind of fear will lead to that second resolution, to be diligent. I pointed out that the opposite of diligence is laziness and that laziness is a sin which is tolerated in many Christian circles today. Although in many ways it's much more deadly than drunkenness, drunkenness is frowned on, laziness is tolerated. But, believe me, the end of laziness is disaster.

Today I'm going to go on to the third step, the third "let us" in Hebrews. This, too, is found in the fourth chapter. Interestingly, the first four steps are all found in Hebrews 4. This third step is in Hebrews 4:14:

“Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.” (NAS)

That's the third “let us.” “Let us hold fast our confession.”

We need to understand what is meant by confession. That word is derived from a word in the original Greek of the New Testament which means “to say the same as.” That's the basic meaning of confession. It's saying the same as and, in its scriptural context, it means that we say the same as God says, that we make the words of our mouth agree with God's Word.

There's a further implication to the word confession. It means that we “say it out boldly,” that we're not intimidated. The word confession has a considerable history in the history of the Christian church. There have been certain confessions, certain statements of faith, that have been very significant, and many, many times it's taken boldness and courage on the part of those who made them to take that stand. But the Bible says, “Let us hold fast our confession.”

And then it points out particularly that it's our confession that relates us to Jesus as our high priest. I think many Christians don't have a very clear picture of Jesus as our high priest, but it's one of His most important ongoing ministries on our behalf. He's there as our representative in the presence of God the Father, standing good for us. And every time we make the right confession, we say the right, positive thing with our mouths, Jesus has obligated Himself to ensure that that confession is made good in our experience. Listen to what the writer of Hebrews says just a little earlier on in chapter 3:1. He says this:

“Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession.” (NAS)

Notice those last words, “[the] High Priest of our confession.” That means that our confession enlists Jesus as our High Priest, but the opposite, unfortunately, is also true. If we make no confession, we have no high priest. Not that Jesus has ceased to be our high priest, but that we give Him no opportunity to minister as our high priest. He's the high priest of our confession. If we say the right things in faith, with our mouths, according to Scripture, then Jesus has eternally obligated Himself to see that we'll never be put to shame, that we'll always come into the experience of what we confess. But if we don't say the right thing, then alas, we silence the lips of our high priest. He's got nothing to say on

our behalf for us in heaven.

He's also called our advocate. The word advocate is pretty similar to the modern word attorney. Jesus is the legal expert who's there to plead our case in heaven. He's never lost a case. But if we don't make a confession, He has no case to plead, so the case goes against us by default.

So you see how important confession is and therefore it's so important that we give heed to this third “let us” of Hebrews: “Let us hold fast our confession.” This principle of right confession, saying the right thing with our mouth, has a central place in the gospel and in our experience of salvation. In fact, there is no salvation without right confession. Listen to what Paul says in Romans 10:8-10. Verses in which he explains as clearly as anywhere in the New Testament what is required for salvation. He begins this way:

“The Word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart’ [The basis for salvation is the Word.], that is, the word of faith which we are preaching, [It has to be appropriated by faith and then this is the message:] that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved;”

You see, there are two things we have to do, one with the heart, one with the mouth. We have to believe with the heart; but we have to confess, or say it out, with the mouth. And then Paul goes on in the next verse:

“for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.” (NAS)

So you see, no confession, no salvation. It's good to believe in your heart, but it's not sufficient. You've not only got to believe in your heart, you've got to say it out boldly with your mouth making the words of your mouth agree with the Word of God. Our initial confession relates us to Jesus as high priest, but His ongoing ministry on our behalf as high priest depends on our ongoing confession. You see, the whole Bible shows that our words determine our destiny. Let me just give you some very penetrating Scriptures. Proverbs 18:21:

“Death and life are in the power of the tongue, And those who love it will eat its fruit.” (NAS)

See, the tongue is either going to produce death in our lives, if we make a wrong confession; life, if we make a right confession. And whatever we say with our tongue, we're

going to eat the fruit of it. And then in Matthew 12:36-37, the words of Jesus:

“And I say to you, that every careless word that men shall speak, they shall render account for it in the day of judgment. For by your words you shall be justified, and by your words you shall be condemned.” (NAS)

I've so often heard Christians say silly things that they didn't mean and were not honoring to God and then they excused themselves by saying, "Well, I didn't really mean it." But you see, Jesus said, "Every careless word that men shall speak, they shall render account for it in the day of judgment." It's not an excuse that you didn't mean it. You've got to hold fast your confession.

Ultimately we only have two alternatives in our relationship to Christ and to the Scriptures: to confess or to deny. Listen to what Jesus says in Matthew 10:32-33:

“Every one therefore who shall confess Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. [That's His response as our high priest. If we confess Him, He confesses us. But the alternative is given in the next verse:] But whoever shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven.” (NAS)

And between those two ultimately there's no third alternative. In spiritual things, in the long run, there's no neutrality. Jesus said, "He who is not with Me is against Me." Either you're going to make the right confession to salvation or you're going to make the wrong confession and it will not produce salvation.

So let's go back to that third "let us": "Let us hold fast our confession." I want to say this to you, keep affirming your faith verbally. Use the positive to exclude the negative.

Well, our time is up for today, but I'll be back with you again next week at this same time. I'll be continuing with this theme: "Twelve Steps to a Good Year."

This week I'm making a special offer to all my listeners of my book Foundation for Faith. This book has helped many thousands to lay a solid, scriptural foundation for successful Christian living. Its message is particularly appropriate for the start of a new year.

Also, my complete series of messages this week on "Twelve Steps to a Good Year" is available in a single,

carefully-edited, 60-minute cassette. So stay tuned now for details.

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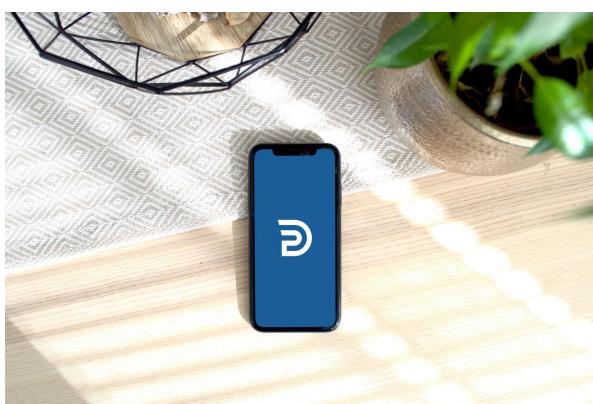
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