

Introduction

- Phone screen-time report - Why is it there? Apple introduced it in 2018 because people were becoming increasingly concerned about how much time they were spending on their phone. It shows total screen time, which apps consumed the most time, how often you picked up your phone, etc.
- When you see the report, it reveals truth about you - how much time you spend on the phone. The report just reports. The report didn't create the problem, but the report does reveal the problem we have with overusing our phones.
- In [Nehemiah 8](#), God's people gathered around God's Word, and their sin was exposed. [Nehemiah 9](#) is the people's response to what God's Word had exposed.
- Confession is agreeing with God about our sin. It's saying, "God you are right, and I am wrong."
- We don't believe that we can lose our salvation, but we do believe that ongoing sin affects our ongoing fellowship with God. Ongoing confession renews us in our walk with God.
- This morning, some of us are stuck in sinful behaviors and lifestyles, and we're afraid to confess our sins. We're afraid of what God thinks of us, or what others will think. [Nehemiah 9](#) is a beautiful reminder of why you need to confess your sins regularly. From [Nehemiah 9](#), I want to give you three reasons why you need to confess your sins regularly.

Confess your sin because you have sinned against the God who has created all things.

- vs. 1 - After Feast of Booths, and celebrating God's faithfulness, people come before God fasting, wearing sackcloth, and head in the dusts. Sackcloth made of black goat's hair. it was ugly and uncomfortable. A danger to avoid is becoming comfortable with sin that should grieve us.
- Also, a good reminder to us that while we don't wear sackcloth to worship on Sunday morning as a sign of our sorrow of our sin, we often do come pretending like everything is ok with us when it's not. We need a lot more honesty with God and each other about the state of our souls.
- vs. 2-3 - The people gathered to confess their sins - to admit where they had gone wrong and to start again in their relationship with God.
- vs. 3 - Like [Nehemiah 8](#), a long time in the presence of God. This time, three hours reading the Law and three hours confessing their sins. What would happen if we didn't put a time limit on the work of God? I'm not proposing a 6 hour worship service, but more time in God's presence as a congregation reflecting on God's Word and responding together could only help us grow together in our devotion to God and each other.
- vs. 5-37 - a corporate prayer that tells the story of God's faithfulness to Israel in spite of their sin. The prayer starts by acknowledging God as creator. Why? The prayer starts with an acknowledgement of who God is - He is creator of all. Creation is meant to leave us in awe of the creator.
- He is the creator of you.
- **When you see that God created you, you can't live as though you belong to yourself.** He made you. He holds your life in your hands. He is sustaining you in this very moment. He has the power to give life and take life. God has the right to define how you live. The lie the enemy tells you: "This is my life. I can do what I want with it." Simply not true. You

don't get to decide what's right and wrong. How to use your body apart from what God says, how to treat others, how to use your money, how to spend your time, etc.

- Confession is admitting that we've taken our lives, which belong to God, into our own hands. Where are you living as if God has no claim on you?
- **When you see how majestic God is, you can't minimize sin.** Every sin is significant because every sin is committed against the God who made us and deserves our worship. To sin is to treat God as though He were smaller than He revealed Himself to be.
- Confession starts when I see my sin as God see it - as an affront to His greatness.

Confess your sins because God is overwhelmingly faithful despite your repeated failures.

- vs. 7-37 one of the longest recorded reviews of Israel's history in the Old Testament. We need to know God's story, because God's story highlights His faithful goodness to His people throughout time.
- vs. 7-8 - Starts with Abraham. God chose Abraham and made a covenant with him to give him descendants and land. God fulfilled His promise to Abraham. The people who returned from the exile were in the land that was promised to Abraham, and they were a great nation. If you read Abraham's story, there were times when Abraham was unfaithful to God. He lied about the identity of his wife. He slept with his servant because he didn't trust God's plan. But, in spite of Abraham's sinful failures, God remained faithful.
- vs. 9-15 - God was faithful to His people while they were slaves in Egypt. He heard their cry for deliverance in [Exodus 2](#). God performed signs and wonders to demonstrate His power to Pharaoh. God divided

the red sea and defeated the Hebrews' enemies. God led His people in the wilderness with a cloud by day and pillar of fire by night. God was not only their creator. He was their redeemer.

- vs. 13 - God spoke to His people from Sinai - giving them the gift of His Word - the Law - so they would know how to live before Him.
- vs. 14 - God gave them the Sabbath. God gave His people rest.
- vs. 15 - God provided food for His people. Every morning, they woke up and ate manna from heaven. When they were thirsty, God brought forth water from a rock.
- vs. 15 - God told them to possess the land, and they did. By the power of God, they defeated their enemies in the Promised Land and the nation grew.
- vs. 16-21 - God was faithful, yet the people responded with unfaithfulness. They failed to remember the wonders of God (vs. 17). They were "stiff-necked" - a phrase used to describe a stubborn ox. In the wilderness, they made a golden-calf to worship instead of worshipping the God of all creation.
- Yet, in spite of their failures, God remained faithful. He did not cast off His people. They never lacked anything (vs.21).
- vs. 22-25. God was faithful to His plan to build the Hebrews into a great nation. He gave them kingdoms and established the boundaries of the land. Led them to victory over their enemies.
- vs. 26-30 - But, the people continued to be unfaithful. They flung God's law behind their backs - as if it didn't matter (vs. 26).
- At times, God handed them over to their enemies in judgment (vs. 27). The people cried out, and God delivered, but they kept returning to their sin.

- vs. 30 - God was patient and abundant in compassion. vs. 32 - He was gracious to keep His covenant with His people.
- These verses recount God's faithfulness to His people in spite of their unfaithfulness. God's faithfulness motivates us toward confession. When we think about how good God has been to us, we know we can come clean with God because He's not going to stop being good to His children.
- **Remember God's faithfulness.** Your story is a story of ups and downs. There have been times when you've walked well with the Lord, and there have been many times when you walked in disobedience. Through it all, God has been good and faithful. Remember:
 - How He saved you.
 - Prayers answered.
 - How He has provided.
 - Seasons He carried you through.
 - People He has placed in your life.
 - Times He has restored you.
- Your life story is a story of God's faithfulness to you. How can you continue to walk in sin towards a God who has been so faithful to you?
- **Own your unfaithfulness.** In God's economy, sin is not merely breaking a rule. Sin is responding to God's faithfulness with unfaithfulness.
 - Be specific - the Jews were. Where are you being unfaithful in your walk with the Lord?
 - Accept the consequences - confession and repentance renews your walk with the Lord, but it doesn't take away the consequences of your sin. Because of your rebellion against God, there may be consequences of sin that you will deal with for the rest of your life.

- **Confess without excuses.** Don't give God your ifs, buts, or maybes. (from Brad Hambrick) e.g., *If God would have, then I wouldn't have... I did that, but you don't understand... Maybe I did the wrong thing, (not willing to take ownership.)*
- Confession is not excusing away your sins. As a believer, it's recognizing how faithful God has been and how unfaithful you have been and being honest with God about it.

Confess your sins because God's grace and mercy are greater than your sin.

- vs. 17 - central to the passage because it describes who God is. He is forgiving, gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, abounding in love. He does not abandon His people.
- The language echoes [Exodus 34:6-7](#) - right after the golden calf incident. [Nehemiah 9](#) telling us that the people repeated the mistake they made at Mt. Sinai. They continued to rebel horribly, and God remained the same: gracious, merciful, patient, and faithful.
- You may be here this morning and your sins are far worse than you want to admit. You don't to admit the dark, evil thoughts that consume your mind that no one knows about but you. You don't want to admit how bitterness and rage has consumed your heart. You don't want to admit how far down the path of sexual sin you have gone. You don't want to admit how consumed you are by pornography. You don't want to admit how complacent you are in your walk with the Lord.
- Your sin may be worse than you want to admit, but Christ's grace and mercy is far greater than you can ever imagine. His grace is greater than your sin.
- **If God is gracious and merciful, there's no need to hide in fear.** It's what Adam and Eve did. It's what we all do. "What will God think of me?"

Or, “What will God do to me?” “If you are in Christ, you do not have to wonder whether God will cast you away when you confess. The cross has already demonstrated His love for you. For the believer, confession does not rescue you; it restores honesty and intimacy in your fellowship with God.

- **If God is gracious and merciful, you have every reason to walk in repentance.** Don't stay in your sin. Confess it and turn back to God. Confession without repentance is incomplete. Confession should lead to repentance. Repentance is a change of direction. Repentance means:
 - I turn away.
 - I remove what feeds the sin.
 - I practice putting off and putting on. ([Ephesians 4](#))
 - I invite accountability into my life.
 - I keep turning back to God when I stumble. I use the power of His Spirit to overcome sin and live in victory as we pursue Him by faith.
- [Nehemiah 9:37](#) shows us that confession alone could not solve Israel's deepest problem. They were back in the land, but they were still in distress. They would continue to fall back into sin. They needed more than another reform, another wall, or another political rescue. They needed deliverance from sin itself. So God sent His Son. Jesus lived the righteous life we failed to live, died the death our sins deserved, and rose again to set us free from sin's guilt and power. And when believers still stumble, we have an Advocate with the Father; Jesus Christ the righteous One who offers restored fellowship through confession.
- This morning, if not a follower of Jesus, repent of your sins and turn to Him by faith. If a follower of Jesus, what sins do you need to confess that are hindering your fellowship with God?

