

Homework for Lesson 34: A Faith to Confirm

Professing faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior is the foundation for a journey with God. However, making that profession and understanding what it is you are saying you believe can be confusing.

John Wesley wanted to help others grow in their love of God by setting some guiding principles (later called rules) for them to follow. Wesley encouraged fellow believers to 1- do no harm, by avoiding evil, 2- do good, and 3- constantly connect with God. These general rules influence our current membership vows.

We are now going to focus on your personal commitment to Jesus Christ. If you choose to be confirmed, then the pastor is going to ask you three very important questions.

MEMBERSHIP VOWS

1. Do you renounce the spiritual forces of wickedness, reject the evil powers of this world, and repent of your sin?
2. Do you accept the freedom and power God gives you to resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves?
3. Do you confess Jesus Christ as your Savior, put your whole trust in his grace, and promise to serve him as your Lord, in union with the Church which Christ has opened to people of all ages, nations, and races?"

These three questions are basically guidelines to claiming that Jesus is your Lord and Savior. If you choose to answer "I do" to each of these questions, then you are choosing to accept responsibility for your own faith.

- In answering "I do" to question number one you are admitting that there are people, places, and activities that keep you from loving God and your neighbor, and that cause you to sin. You are accepting responsibility to turn away from and not engage in those things anymore.
- In answering "I do" to question number two you are recognizing that God gives you a choice to be in a relationship with God and fellow believers. You are promising to willingly walk away from any person, place, thing, or system that separates you from God or does harm to your brothers and sisters in Christ.
- In answering "I do" to question number three you are confessing that you believe Jesus is the Son of God, came to earth to die for your sins, and by his death and resurrection he has shown his love for you and forgiven your sins. You are promising to let Jesus determine how you live your life.

These are some pretty big commitments. We are going to take a few minutes now to look at a person from the Bible who, while not in these exact words, felt the assurance of Jesus' love and forgiveness so much that he was able to say YES to all three of those questions.

Read LUKE 19:1-10 (NIV)

Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he could not see over the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way.

When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly.

All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a sinner."

But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount."

Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

Underline the ways Zacchaeus renounces wickedness, rejects evil, or repents of his sin.

Circle examples of ways Zacchaeus commits to resist evil, injustice or oppression.

Create a list of ways Zacchaeus trusts in Jesus, promised to serve Jesus, and experienced the assurance that Jesus would forgive him all his sins.