

Saved: God's Plan of Salvation, Teacher's Guide

Week 5: Confessing Jesus as Lord

Romans 10:8–13; Matthew 10:32–33

Teaching Aim (Teacher Orientation)

This lesson sets confession in its place within the plan of salvation and defines its content: “Jesus is Lord.” Doctrinally, two things are at stake. First, the content of the confession matters. To confess that Jesus is Lord is to confess His deity, His resurrection, and His absolute authority; the word “Lord” (kyrios) is the very word the Greek Old Testament used for God. This is the good confession, the same Peter made (“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God”), the same the Ethiopian made before his baptism, the same Timothy made before many witnesses. Second, the function of confession matters. Paul places it within the saving response (Romans 10:9–10), and Jesus makes our acknowledgment of Him before others decisive (Matthew 10:32–33). Confession is not an optional flourish; it is faith come to speech.

Guard against two distortions. On one side is the reduction of confession to a single recited formula that, once said, requires nothing further, a kind of verbal “sinner’s prayer.” Romans 10 will not allow this; the confession that “Jesus is Lord” is, by its very content, a surrender of the whole life to His rule, and it begins a life of acknowledging Him before others, not a single moment. On the other side is the privatized faith of our age, which treats belief as a personal matter best kept to oneself. Jesus directly rejects this: a faith ashamed to be spoken is on its way to denial. Keep confession tied to the heart (Romans 10:10): it is the mouth speaking what the heart truly believes, neither empty words nor silent belief.

Aim the lesson at courage and wholehearted allegiance. Every student faces the pressure to keep quiet, to soften the offense, to blend in. Help them feel both the cost and the joy of owning Christ openly, and help them see that the One who asks to be confessed has promised to confess them before the Father. For any in the room who have never made the good confession, this lesson opens that door warmly and naturally, leading on toward baptism in the weeks just ahead.

Question 1

Student Question:

Paul says that “if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord... you will be saved” (v. 9). What does it actually mean to confess that “Jesus is Lord,” and why is this confession far more than admitting a historical fact about who Jesus was?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Define the content of the confession. “Jesus is Lord” is the earliest and most basic Christian confession. The word “Lord” (kyrios) carries the full weight of deity and sovereign authority; in the Greek Old Testament it stands for the divine name. To confess Jesus as Lord is to confess that the crucified and risen Jesus is God and rightful King.

Show that this is far more than a historical statement. Many will grant that Jesus existed, taught well, or even rose from the dead as a fact. To confess Him as Lord is to acknowledge His authority over me. It is simultaneously a statement about Him and a surrender of myself.

Tie confession to the resurrection. Paul joins “Jesus is Lord” with believing “that God raised him from the dead.” The resurrection is what vindicates the lordship; a dead teacher is no one’s Lord, but the risen Christ is Lord of all (Acts 2:36). Confession rests on the empty tomb.

Note the cost embedded in the word. In a world of rival lords, Caesar then, self and culture now, to say “Jesus is Lord” is to dethrone every other claimant. The confession has teeth.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The content of the confession: Jesus is Lord (kyrios), God and sovereign King
- Confession as both a statement about Christ and a surrender of self
- The resurrection as the ground of the lordship (Acts 2:36)
- “Jesus is Lord” as the dethroning of every rival lord
- Confession as far more than acknowledging a historical fact

Discussion Prompts

- What is the full weight of the word “Lord” in this confession?
- How is confessing Jesus as Lord different from agreeing He existed or taught well?
- Why must the lordship of Jesus rest on His resurrection?

Question 2

Student Question:

To confess Jesus as Lord is to surrender the throne of your own life to Him. Where in your life are you still quietly holding onto the throne, an area where you say “Jesus is Lord” with your mouth but rule as your own lord in practice?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This self-examining question exposes the gap between a confessed lordship and a practiced one. It is easy to say “Jesus is Lord” on Sunday and rule our own lives Monday through Saturday. Help students find the specific throne they still occupy.

Name common thrones: finances, career, romantic life, leisure, reputation, a relationship, a grievance we will not surrender. Lordship is not abstract; it is decided in concrete arenas where Christ's will and ours collide.

Move toward a real surrender. Confessing Christ as Lord this week might mean handing Him a specific decision we have been making on our own terms. The goal is to let the confession reach the one area we have walled off.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The gap between a confessed and a practiced lordship
- Identifying the specific "throne" we still occupy
- Lordship decided in concrete arenas, not in the abstract
- Surrendering one walled-off area to Christ

Discussion Prompts

- Where do you say "Jesus is Lord" but still rule as your own lord?
- What concrete decision could you hand over to His lordship this week?
- What makes that particular area so hard to surrender?

Question 3

Student Question:

Paul joins the heart and the mouth: "with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved" (v. 10). Why does God connect inward belief and outward confession so closely, and what does this teach us about the nature of a genuine, whole-person faith?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Unfold the heart-mouth pairing of Romans 10:10. God designed salvation to involve the whole person, the inner conviction of the heart and its outward expression on the lips. The two belong together; neither stands alone.

Explain why inward belief seeks outward confession. Genuine conviction does not stay locked inside. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks" (Matthew 12:34). A faith permanently unwilling to be spoken raises the question of whether it is really there.

Explain why outward words need inward reality. Confession is not a magic incantation; mere words without heart-belief are empty (Matthew 15:8). The mouth confesses what the heart believes; the two must match.

Apply to whole-person discipleship. Christ wants not just our private agreement or our public performance but our integrated selves, heart and mouth, inward and outward, aligned. This is the integrity the gospel produces.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The heart-mouth pairing as whole-person salvation (Romans 10:10)
- Genuine conviction seeking expression (Matthew 12:34)
- Confession without heart-belief as empty words (Matthew 15:8)
- The integrity of inward faith and outward confession aligned

Discussion Prompts

- Why does God join inward belief and outward confession so closely?
- What does a faith that is never spoken suggest about the heart?
- How do we guard against confession becoming mere empty words?

Question 4

Student Question:

For many believers, faith stays comfortably internal and private. Is your faith mostly a private matter of the heart, or is it something others around you actually hear you confess? What is one specific way your inward faith could become a visible, spoken confession this week?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This self-focused question challenges the privatized faith so common today. Many sincere believers keep their faith entirely internal, never letting it surface where others can hear.

Name the cultural pressure honestly. We are told that faith is fine as long as it stays private, that bringing it into the open is rude or intolerant. This pressure quietly shapes even committed Christians into silence.

Aim at one concrete, spoken confession. It need not be a sermon: a word of thanks to God said aloud, an honest answer about where we were Sunday morning, a simple invitation. The goal is to let the inward faith become audible in one specific relationship this week.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The privatized faith of our age
- Cultural pressure to keep belief internal
- Making faith audible without making it obnoxious
- One concrete, spoken confession this week

Discussion Prompts

- Is your faith mostly private, or do others actually hear you own Christ?
- What cultural messages push you toward keeping faith to yourself?
- What is one specific way your faith could become audible this week?

Question 5

Student Question:

In Matthew 10:32, Jesus says, “everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father.” What does it mean to acknowledge Jesus “before men,” and why does Jesus tie our confession of Him so directly to His confession of us before the Father?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Open Matthew 10:32 in its setting. Jesus is sending out His disciples into hostile territory, and He frames confession as acknowledging Him “before men,” out in the open, where it can be seen and may cost something.

Explain the stunning reciprocity. Our acknowledgment of Christ before men is matched by His acknowledgment of us before the Father. The One we own before a watching world is the One who will own us before the throne of God. This is staggering grace, not a threat: the Lord of glory promises to speak our name to the Father.

Stress that this is ongoing, not merely initial. “Everyone who acknowledges” describes a settled pattern of life, the disciple who keeps owning Christ in word and deed, not a one-time statement followed by a lifetime of silence.

Keep it tender. The point is not to terrify the timid but to dignify confession. Every quiet, costly owning of Jesus in an ordinary week is noticed in heaven and will be answered by Christ Himself.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Acknowledging Christ “before men,” openly and at potential cost
- The reciprocity of confession: Christ confesses us before the Father
- Confession as an ongoing pattern of life, not a single act
- Confession dignified by Christ’s notice, not merely demanded

Discussion Prompts

- What does it mean to acknowledge Jesus “before men” in your daily life?
- How does Christ’s promise to confess us before the Father move you?
- Why does Jesus describe acknowledging Him as an ongoing pattern, not a one-time act?

Question 6

Student Question:

Jesus also warns, “whoever denies me before men, I also will deny” (v. 33). We rarely deny Christ outright, but we often deny Him quietly, through silence, going along with the crowd, or hiding our allegiance. Where are you most tempted to deny Him in these subtle ways, and why?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This self-examining question addresses the subtle denials we rarely name. Few of us deny Christ outright like Peter at the fire, but many of us deny Him by silence, by laughing along, by hiding our allegiance to fit in.

Name the quiet denials concretely: staying silent when faith would be unwelcome, letting people assume we are not believers, softening Jesus into a harmless figure to avoid offense, declining to be seen at worship. These are denials by omission.

Lead toward repentance and resolve, not despair. Peter denied and was restored; the point is not to wallow but to turn and resolve to acknowledge Him next time. Identify the specific setting where the temptation to deny is strongest, and plan ahead for faithfulness there.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Denial by silence and omission, not only outright denial
- Concrete forms: blending in, softening Jesus, hiding allegiance
- Peter’s denial and restoration as hope, not despair
- Planning ahead for faithfulness in the hardest settings

Discussion Prompts

- In what subtle ways are you most tempted to deny Christ?
- What is usually behind that temptation, fear, shame, or a desire to belong?
- How can Peter’s restoration encourage you to confess Him next time?

Question 7

Student Question:

Throughout the New Testament, confessing Jesus as Lord stands as a vital part of coming to salvation, the good confession a believer makes (see Acts 8:37; 1 Timothy 6:12). Why is this open confession a fitting and necessary expression of saving faith, and how does it prepare the way for baptism into Christ?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Establish confession’s place in the plan of salvation. The New Testament shows believers confessing Christ as part of coming to salvation: the Ethiopian confesses before his baptism (Acts 8:37 in many texts), Timothy makes “the good confession in the presence of many witnesses” (1 Timothy 6:12). Confession is faith spoken at the threshold of the new life.

Show why it fits. Having heard, believed, and repented, the believer owns Christ openly; this verbal surrender naturally precedes the bodily surrender of baptism. Confession and baptism go together as the inward allegiance and its public enactment.

Connect to “calling on the name of the Lord” (Romans 10:13, recalling Week 2). To call on the Lord includes confessing Him; the saved are those who own Jesus as Lord and act on it in baptism (Acts 22:16).

Guard against the formula error. Confession is necessary, but it is not a magic sentence that saves apart from the believing, repentant, surrendered heart behind it. It is the appointed expression of saving faith, not an incantation.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Confession as part of the saving response: the Ethiopian, Timothy (Acts 8:37; 1 Timothy 6:12)
- The good confession as faith spoken at the threshold of new life
- Confession preceding and preparing for baptism
- Confession within “calling on the name of the Lord” (Romans 10:13; Acts 22:16)
- Avoiding the view of confession as a saving formula apart from the heart

Discussion Prompts

- How does confession prepare the way for baptism into Christ?
- Why is the good confession a fitting expression of saving faith?
- How is confessing Christ different from reciting a saving formula?

Question 8

Student Question:

Confessing Christ has always carried a cost, from Caesar’s empire to our own culture. What has confessing Jesus cost you, or what do you fear it might cost you? How does the promise that He will confess you before the Father reframe that cost?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This self-focused question names the cost. Confession has always been costly: martyrdom under Caesar, social and family rupture in many cultures today, ridicule and lost opportunity in ours. Let students name their real or feared cost honestly.

Validate the cost without inflating it. Some face genuine hardship for Christ; others mostly fear awkwardness. Both are real to the person, and both are addressed by the same promise.

Reframe the cost with the promise. Whatever confession costs us before men, Christ will more than answer it by confessing us before the Father. The math of discipleship always favors faithfulness; nothing owned for Him is finally lost (Mark 8:38; Luke 9:26).

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The historic and present cost of confessing Christ
- Honoring real cost without inflating mere awkwardness
- Christ's confession of us before the Father as the reframing promise
- The math of discipleship: nothing owned for Him is lost (Mark 8:38)

Discussion Prompts

- What has confessing Christ cost you, or what do you fear it might cost?
- How does Christ's promise to confess you change how you weigh that cost?
- Where do you need courage to own Him this week despite the cost?

Question 9

Student Question:

To confess "Jesus is Lord" is to make the most total claim a human being can make, that the risen Christ has absolute authority over all of life. How does this confession both express saving faith and lay claim to everything we are, so that it is neither an empty word we say to be saved nor a work we perform to earn salvation, but the wholehearted owning of the Lord we have trusted? And how does genuine confession then shape the whole of the Christian life, not just its beginning?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This is the heaviest doctrinal block: the total claim of "Jesus is Lord" and how confession functions within grace. Begin with the breadth of the claim. To confess Jesus as Lord is to acknowledge His absolute authority over every part of life, family, money, sexuality, work, speech, allegiance. There is no corner exempt. This is the largest claim a human being can make or submit to.

Now address the grace-and-response tension, as in every week. Confession is neither an empty word that automatically saves nor a meritorious work that earns salvation. It is the wholehearted owning of the Lord we have trusted. We do not confess Christ to put God in our debt; we confess Him because we have believed in our hearts and cannot keep silent. Confession is faith finding its voice, the appointed expression of a trusting, surrendered heart, not a payment.

Resist the formula reduction once more. Because "Jesus is Lord" means total surrender, it can never be reduced to a one-time recited sentence that leaves the life unchanged. The same lips

that confess Him at the beginning go on confessing Him for a lifetime, in word and in deed. A confession that surrenders everything cannot, by definition, be a single empty moment.

Show how confession shapes the whole Christian life. Every later decision is, in effect, a fresh confession or denial of His lordship. The Christian life is the ongoing working out of the one great confession: if He is Lord, then this choice, this relationship, this use of time bows to Him. The good confession at the door becomes the song of the whole house.

Close by holding grace and surrender together. The Lord we confess is the Savior who died for us; surrender to His lordship is not the price of His love but the only fitting response to it. We do not earn Him by confessing Him; we receive Him by owning Him as the Lord He already is.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- “Jesus is Lord” as the most total claim possible: authority over all of life
- Confession as the expression of saving faith, neither an empty word nor a meritorious work
- Why total surrender cannot be reduced to a one-time recited formula
- Every later decision as a fresh confession or denial of His lordship
- The lifelong confession growing out of the initial good confession
- Grace and surrender held together: we receive the Lord we confess, we do not earn Him

Discussion Prompts

- What does it mean that confessing Jesus as Lord claims every area of life?
- How is confession an expression of faith rather than a work that earns salvation?
- How does the one great confession keep shaping every later decision you make?

Question 10

Student Question:

Look back over both passages, the nearness of the word in heart and mouth, and the promise of Christ to acknowledge those who acknowledge Him. Name one specific way Jesus is calling you to confess Him more truly this week, whether by making the good confession for the first time or by living more openly as one who has already owned Him as Lord.

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This capstone calls for a specific act of confession. Gather both passages: the nearness of the word in heart and mouth, and Christ’s promise to acknowledge those who acknowledge Him. Ask each student to name one concrete way to confess Him more truly this week.

Discern where people are. For the not-yet-baptized believer, the next step may be making the good confession and being baptized into Christ, and this lesson opens that door naturally. For the established Christian, it may be breaking a specific silence or owning Christ in a hard setting.

End on the Person and His promise. The One who asks to be confessed is the risen Lord who loves us and will speak our names before the Father. Let students leave eager to own Him, not merely aware that they should.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Naming one concrete act of confession this week
- Discerning the next step: the good confession and baptism, or a renewed owning of Christ
- Opening the door warmly for the seeker
- Confession anchored in Christ's promise to acknowledge us before the Father

Discussion Prompts

- What is one specific way you can confess Christ more truly this week?
- If you have never made the good confession and been baptized, what is your next step?
- Where is Christ asking you to break a silence and own Him openly?