

For if one believes with the heart, he is justified, and if one confesses with the mouth, he is saved. (Romans 10:10)

By Karl Steinbauer

Of the two sentences, each basically says the same thing, only each wants to make sure the other is not misunderstood.

The heart confession is genuine only when it becomes mouth confession. Mouth confession is only genuine when it is heart confession. Mouth confession is not easy to test for its authenticity – in quiet times. As long as the confession brings something in, even if it is only the appearance of holiness, he and she will cultivate it abundantly. But if the oral confession then falls silent, if it brings in nothing, if it perhaps even brings cross, then it is exposed in its hollowness. -

And it has thus become evident that it was not a confession of the heart. For "whose heart is full, his mouth overflows." Calvin says a fine word about the heart confession, "We make the observation (on this word) that the seeds of faith are not in the brain, but in the heart. And by heart is meant a serious and deep movement of the inner life." Regarding the oral confession, he says, "The heart must burn with such zeal for God's glory that the flames also beat outward." One could say: where there is fire, there burns! "I have come to kindle a fire on earth; what would I rather, for it was already burning." Luke 12:49.

A faith which we do not confess is no faith! "I believe, therefore I speak!" That is a death sentence, that one speaks oneself, if one says: "Pastor, I think exactly like you, but one may say nothing." – Or: "Whatever may come, I won't let you take my faith away from me," and then perhaps you point to your chest – but you remain bravely silent! – I know how difficult it often is to open one's mouth, but let us admonish and encourage one another to open our mouths for our Lord Christ, and let us look to Him alone, to whom all authority is given in heaven and on earth.

Dear brothers, the moment will come in the Last Judgment when we will forget all by ourselves to look at any human being, when all our eyes will be on His mouth and we will wait whether He will say *one* single, saving word for us. And our weak, miserable confession, which we have made with fear and trembling, will play a not insignificant role in this. "Whoever confesses me before men I will also confess before my heavenly Father!" [Matthew 10:32] Our faith in the hereafter is an outright fraud if we do not know it in our actions on *this side*. Here in this earthly life it must be seen in our small and big decisions: This is someone who really believes in an eternal life on the other side. God be truer us from retreating to an untruthful, lazy, dumb so-called heart confession and dying from it. But I know that this will be difficult and hard the longer and longer we look at ourselves and our weakness, guilt and sin, and at the oppressors; it will be liberating and joyful for us if we learn more and more to look only at Him, the beginner and perfecter of our faith! [Hebrews 12:2]

"I will preach righteousness in the great congregation; behold, I will not let my mouth be stopped, Lord, Thou knowest. Your righteousness I will not hide in my heart; of Your truth and Your salvation I will speak; I will not conceal Your goodness and faithfulness from the great congregation." (Psalm 40:10f)

I have this one request to God, that I, as long as I breathe, may proclaim His justice and truth and sing His praise. How and where I may do this, I will leave to Him, but therefore I ask Him that also my last breath may be to Him! This is my prayer for mine and my congregation

and church and your prayer for me.

Written in calligraphy on a leaflet on March 21, 1939 in cell 18 of the Neu-Ulm District Court Prison niss.

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