

Mutual Confession of Faults, and Mutual Prayer

by Charles Finney

The sermon emphasizes the importance of confessing faults to one another, as it promotes restoration of justice, peace, and harmony among believers, and leads to personal growth and holiness.

Scripture: Psalm 32:5, Proverbs 28:13, Matthew 5:23-24, Luke 17:3-4, Galatians 6:2, Ephesians 4:32, Colossians 3:13, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, James 5:16, 1 John 1:9

Topics: "Confession", "Mutual Prayer"

Description

Charles Finney emphasizes the significance of mutual confession and prayer among believers, urging that confessing faults to one another fosters healing and spiritual growth. He clarifies that this practice is not about confessing to a priest but rather to those we have wronged, which promotes humility, repentance, and accountability. Finney outlines the implications of confession, including the necessity of genuine remorse and the importance of making restitution. He also highlights that prayer for one another is essential, as it reflects a deep concern for each other's spiritual well-being and facilitates forgiveness. Ultimately, Finney calls for a culture of openness and support within the Christian community to strengthen faith and relationships.

Transcript

"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. --James 5:16

[A sermon from this text was published in the second volume of the Evangelist. The present sermon was prepared without any reference to that, and contemplates different aspects of the same general subject.]

In the present discourse the following points demand our attention.

I. WHAT IS INTENDED BY THE INJUNCTION, "CONFESS YOUR FAULTS ONE TO ANOTHER"?

II. WHAT IS IMPLIED IN COMPLIANCE WITH IT?

III. THE REASONS FOR THIS INJUNCTION.

IV. WHAT IS INTENDED BY THE INJUNCTION, "PRAY ONE FOR ANOTHER"?

I. What is meant by the injunction, "confess your faults one to another"?

1. There is no reason for supposing that this text gives any countenance to the Roman Catholic doctrine of confession to priests. You understand the doctrine so long prevalent in that communion under the name of "auricular confession," so called because it was made in the private ear of the priest. This doctrine holds that all are bound to make auricular confession of every act and of every thought upon which their conscience is at all troubled. Consequently the system makes the priest the repository of all the sins of the church--of all the most private sins of all its members, male or female, to be confessed on pain of damnation. Every one who is acquainted with the results of this system, knows that they have been naturally pernicious to the purity and morals of both priest and people. It is most manifest that the apostle did not contemplate and could never sanction such a system. Confessing faults one to another is not the same thing as confessing all faults to the priest only.

2. Although there is nothing in the text which specially defines the sins contemplated, yet we are doubtless to understand the apostle here to infer primarily to faults committed against others, and to enjoin the confession of faults to those whom we have injured. The doctrine of confession in this form is abundantly taught and implied in the scripture, and is therefore, we may suppose, the particular thing intended here.

The principle involved in this may however extend somewhat farther, namely, (1.) to the confession or disclosure of our besetting sins and of our peculiar temptations and weaknesses. It is plain that by making our confidential Christian friends acquainted with these temptations and besetments of ours, we may enlist their sympathies and prayers in our behalf, and thus secure valuable aid in resisting and overcoming these temptations.

(2.) The principle of the text may also include those sins which though not properly committed against particular individuals, are yet naturally committed in the presence of others, and therefore become a scandal to religion and a stumbling-block to our associates. For example, irritability, which so often stumbles others, and becomes a besetting sin; censoriousness--the practice of speaking harshly of others, and which is often a sore grievance not merely to those against whom we speak evil, but against every benevolent mind that hears us. These and other sins of this class it is plain should be confessed.

In saying these things you will observe I do not say that men are bound to reveal every thing they know--all the sins of which they think themselves guilty--even such as are known to none but themselves and God. It does not appear that the Bible makes the duty of confession to men thus universal.

II. What is implied in obeying this injunction?

1. That we are thoroughly convinced of our sin; that we not only admit the fact, but its wickedness, as a sin against God and our neighbor. It is one thing for a man to confess his fault as a real fault and a sin; and quite another to acknowledge the fact without recognizing its heinous guilt. Hence our text must imply that we really understand and sincerely confess the actual guilt of our sin.

2. That we repent and renounce our sin. Confession is no better than an insult to God and man if unaccompanied with repentance and renunciation of sin confessed.

3. Humility is also implied. By this is meant that disposition which loves to take its own place, though it be a very low place--which does not seek to palliate, but really unmask one's self and naturally seeks the very place which seems to belong to us.

Commonly the great difficulty found in confessing is that men are too proud. They do not love to place themselves as low in the estimation of others as they ought to be. Now humility stands right over against this pride, and implies a willingness to come down to its own low place.

A forced and extorted confession is not the thing enjoined in the text. When a man confesses under the sting of a scorpion conscience, or because, convicted by public disclosures and confounded by appalling revelations, he can not do otherwise and yet maintain any show of Christianity--such confessions, though they may cost a proud man a prodigious struggle, are yet in real value exceedingly cheap.

4. Genuine confession implies readiness to make restitution for the wrong we have done. Indeed confession is in one sense an element of restitution--a part of restitution itself; for example, if you have injured your neighbor in property or in reputation,--to make confession of the fact is one step in the process of restitution. But it is by no means the whole. If the case involve property, you must make restitution in kind;--if it involve reputation of person, you are bound to make restitution as far as you can. This is really implied in the spirit of this injunction. No man in his right mind could suppose that if he had stolen, his confession would be worth a straw without ample restitution. And the same principle should certainly apply in all cases where restitution is possible.

5. It is implied that the confession be full and free, not scanty and constrained. Let it be made with a free, full, and honest heart, in such a spirit and manner as will satisfy the reasonable views of the injured party. How can we suppose that God will be satisfied with any thing less? Suppose you have wronged a man and he knows it, and feels it. You come to him and after a sort you confess; but instead of making a full and satisfactory confession, you merely hint at your wrong deeds. He knows that you are not an honest man, and that you have not even answered the demands of your own conscience. Such a confession can do neither yourself nor your neighbor any good. Confession therefore should be poured out free as water, full and thorough.

6. Legitimate confession implies and involves throwing yourself upon mercy. When persons thoroughly confess their sins to God, they cease to justify themselves before Him, and throw themselves entirely upon his mercy. They rest upon his clemency alone and leave themselves wholly in the hands of God. In a similar way, when you confess to man you throw yourself upon his clemency; you confess your wrong, and forego all pleas of justification.

7. Where persons confess their besetting sins, the act implies a sincere desire to be holy, and an honest determination to give up sin and be rid of it forever.

I have often been struck with the different manner in which different individuals hear the announcement of the doctrine of sanctification. Proclaim to a body of professed Christians the fact that through grace they may in this life be delivered from all sin, and the reception of it will often speak volumes in revealing their real character. It serves to show their precise attitude towards sin. For example, I once preached in Rochester on this subject, and no sooner had the congregation dispersed than one man came to me, saying with great earnestness--"Mr. Finney, that is too good news to be true." There was a minister in that audience, however, who did not regard it as good news at all. He did not seem to treat the doctrine as if he had any desire to have it true.

Who has not observed this very difference? Preach the doctrine of a present salvation from sin to a man really panting to be delivered from sin, and he will hail it with intense interest, if not at once with open-hearted welcome. He will receive it most readily if he thinks it may be true. He will long to have it

prove true, and his heart will throw no obstacles in the way of his candidly investigating its evidence, and cordially embracing all that evidence can be found to sustain.

But if he does not want it to prove true, he will cavil against it bitterly--will repel its evidence stubbornly, and of course will be likely to reveal himself unconsciously as the enemy of all righteousness. He will show that he takes no interest in being made free from sin at present--no real interest in being free from sin ever.

These developments of character are vastly better testimony to one's real state of mind than can elsewhere be given. No man ever yet caviled against this doctrine who in heart longed to become holy. Even if he does not believe the doctrine true, and hence feels constrained to oppose it, there will be no spirit of cavil. When you see men cavil at any doctrine, you may know they do not want it to be true. It is not congenial to their hearts.

Who does not know that the doctrine of entire sanctification has of late received a great deal of opposition under a pretense of zeal for the truth, and opposition to error, which after all has been nothing more nor less before God and the whole world than a mere spirit of caviling and a most manifest opposition to truth and disinclination to have that doctrine proved true? It has been mournful and appalling to notice the exhibition of real opposition to holiness which has manifested itself in many quarters within the last few years. I am sure I do not say this censoriously. It is what every body knows to be true who has kept his eye open to the real manifestations which have been made through the pulpit and the press, through ecclesiastical organizations and in many other ways against the doctrine of holiness in this life.

But to return. When Christians reveal their deep sin to their brethren, it is always implied that they are really panting after holiness--that they abhor these sins which they confess, and are ready to do any thing however humiliating to mortify these horrible sins they so much hate.

III. Reasons for the injunction, "Confess your faults to one another."

In respect to personal injuries inflicted upon others, the injunction is founded in justice. Confession is a necessary element of restitution. We can not be just towards our injured brother without it.

Again, it is indispensable to peace with God. It is naturally impossible that we can have peace with God without confession of known offences against our neighbor. Who needs be told that God can have no fellowship with injustice, and of course none with those who act unjustly! Does not his eye mark all iniquity? --Your injured neighbor might come before the Lord and say--"Lord, he has wronged me, Thou knowest, and now wilt Thou hold fellowship with him?"

Confession is just as indispensable to peace of mind as it is to peace with God. Suppose all the world were at peace with us and if it were possible, suppose God were too; yet we could not persuade ourselves that we are right. Conscience will forever upbraid us until we confess and do all we possibly can under the circumstances to make restitution for our wrong deeds.

Confession is indispensable to peace with those whom we have injured. Although the injured man may have no ill-will towards us--no spirit inconsistent with the gospel--no disposition to retaliate; yet it is impossible that he should have the spirit of Christian sympathy and harmony with us so long as he knows us to be impenitent and unwilling to confess known wrongs. This is a difficulty--a barrier between us,--which can not be removed until he is satisfied that I am honest; and this satisfaction he can not have

till I confess my fault.

Confession is indispensable to peace and sympathy with all the just and good. While it is true that neither God nor the injured party can be at peace with the wrong-doer till he confess, the same is equally true of all holy beings. Their minds can not be in a peaceful and harmonious state towards me while they know that I am guilty of wrong-doing and will not confess. So long as they know me to be in this state they must regard me as a transgressor, and this must create an everlasting barrier between me and them. They may have no disposition to retaliate or injure me, but on the contrary they may be most earnest in prayer for me that God would humble me and break down my pride. Their position towards me may be no other than that of true benevolence; yet till I confess they can not be in Christian sympathy and friendship with me. The thing is naturally impossible.

The same is true of even the wicked. They can not be at peace with me till I confess my wrongs. It is remarkable that a wicked man as really condemns wrongdoing as a good man does, although he may do the very same thing himself. His moral decisions upon the right and the wrong may be just and truthful notwithstanding his own bad character. Let him have a case in which his own selfishness does not bribe his conscience and blind his intelligence, and he will decide that wrong is wrong, and ought to be confessed and put away. You can not therefore have the respect of even wicked men unless you will confess your known wrongs. Even the wickedest men or devils in hell can not be satisfied with your course as right till you confess. They might not love you if you were to become holy, but certainly they never can esteem you until you do--never till you confess and abandon all your known wrong-doings. They can never justify and approve your sins.

Confession of wrong is indispensable to self-respect. It is naturally impossible that you should respect yourself while you withhold proper confession of your sins. By the very laws of your moral nature this can never be. Who does not know this? If you do not know this, you certainly may know it, and by a very little careful attention to the monitions of your own conscience you certainly may know it. Surely you can get no good by resisting the claims of an enlightened conscience, for if all the universe should let you alone in your sin, your conscience would not and could not. Still its voice would ring in your ear, and you could not silence its upbraidings.

Have you not sometimes been ashamed of yourself because you were too proud to confess? This very shame of making confession has filled your soul with bitter agony and the keenest self-reproach and you have sometimes felt that it is a greater shame and a deeper guilt than the original wrong itself. Suppose you were to meet the very man whom you have wronged. The best opportunity is afforded to make the confession which you know to be due--but shame and pride seal your lips. Not a word of confession is lispied. You go away full of remorse and a sense of guilty shame, for you can scarcely help feeling that the last sin is worse than the first. As a physician under these circumstances once cried out--"O how full of hell I am!" so you perhaps are sometimes constrained to say. You know that this which you experience in your soul is an earnest of hell, for you are but too sure that you deserve the deepest, darkest place in the dwellings of the damned.

Nobody else can have confidence in you or respect for you, so long as it is understood that you will not confess known wrongs. You may labor to restore yourself in their confidence--but you are doomed to labor in vain. You may think to live it down, and wash out by good deeds the foul stain attaching to you by reason of unconfessed bad deeds, but you will certainly toil to no purpose. Who can think you an honest man? The truth is, they know better; for you have given them the best possible evidence of your being

supremely proud and selfish. Put on the air of the saint as much as you will, you can not make them confide in you as an honest Christian man, until you confess your sins wherever confession is in the nature of the case, fit and demanded.

Consider, farther, that you can never regain the confidence of discerning men until you are willing to go farther in confession than you are absolutely compelled to go. It often happens that men will go as far as they must, but no farther. They show plainly enough that they go along in the path of confession, only because they are so pushed that they can not help it. Step by step--one step at a time, just as fast as they must, but no faster, they move along. I have often stood and looked on with astonishment to see this singular process. The guilty man finds that one thing is out too far to be denied any longer; so he confesses that;--but nothing more. No, he says, that's all. Soon another feature of the same transaction comes out, blacker than the first. Sir, you are guilty of this too! No, I am not. You can not prove it. Yes, my friend, it is proved beyond all question. O, well then, I confess that, I am very sorry; but that's all. There is nothing more. Well, by the next day some new point is brought up, and the same road is traveled over again. Denial, conviction, confession--and then to save all the rest of his character, he will beg you to accept his solemn word that there is nothing more of the sort to be revealed. Now such a man often uses up his character faster than he is aware. He little thinks how cheap his forced confessions become, and how little confidence is reposed in his most solemn protestations of having made clean work in confession. It is vastly better to go to the bottom in the outset. Yes, go to the bottom--pour it all out--all, so thoroughly that neither man nor God can find anything more belonging to that subject. Do this, and there is hope for you. Men will say of you--Now we know he is honest-hearted, and though he has done wrong, yet he lays his heart all open and we can trust him again. It is not in human nature to resist the appeal which earnest, honest-hearted confession makes to the human heart.

Again, confession of personal wrongs is exceedingly useful to both parties concerned. It greatly relieves the guilty man, rolling off a mountain-weight from his soul, and restoring sweet peace and joy again. On the other side it often seems to be necessary to the party wronged. You will recollect a case which I adduced not long since, of Dr. Hopkins, whose deep and full-hearted confessions were the means of converting his wicked brother-in-law. Confessions will often do what nothing else can. It often serves to show wicked men that Christians are in spirit utterly unlike themselves. They are conscious that they do not confess their faults so--that they know nothing about such brokenness of spirit. Hence the confessions of a humble Christian reach their conscience, as nothing else can. Often have I known men scatter conviction like fire through a congregation by a simple confession of their own sins. I now recollect the case of a minister who by a confession to his people set on foot a glorious revival. He had been to Rome during the great revival there, and become deeply convicted of his great guilt in having cared so little for the salvation of his people. He returned home, prepared a sermon for his people, but when he entered the pulpit the next Sabbath, he could not preach it. His heart was full, and ready to burst, and he told the people that he could not preach a word. O, said he I have been among you so many years, and alas! how little have I cared for your souls! I have tried to please you, and have discharged my regular duties in a way but too heartless; but ah, my guilt in having so overlooked the salvation of your dying souls. Well, he had scarcely begun to confess in this strain, before the deacon wanted to confess, and then other members of the church, and that house became another Bochim. The Lord was there, and his work moved on with power. You can readily see the bearing of that minister's confession. Every one said--If our minister has sins to confess, so have we! If he has reason to confess with such contrition and bitter weeping, how much more reason have we! Thus his confessions effected what no sermon of his ever did.

Again, sincere confessions are highly honorable to the party who makes them. There is perhaps no other way in which men evince more strongly their earnest and sincere approval of the right. It is surely no small testimony to the integrity of a man's character, if he shows that he approves the right so fully and strongly that he does not shrink a moment from condemning himself for any known deviation. His love of right prevails over his pride of character. This man's confessions are a noble testimony to his deep sincerity of heart.

How strange it is that men should be ashamed to confess their sins! They could not make this great mistake if they did not "put darkness for light and light for darkness." Is it not most honorable for a man who has done wrong to make restitution--for a man who has sinned to make a full and free confession? How strange that men should be afraid to confess! They might as well be ashamed to expose their honesty--ashamed to let the world see that they approve the right more than they value an undeserved reputation--a reputation for being what they are not.

Confessions serve to unburden the mind of the injured man, and lead him to exercise forgiveness. Injuries inflicted especially by professed Christians, often become great snares and temptations. Many are overcome by them, fall into a bad state of mind, in which divine truth and grace seem to have no good influence on their hearts. They know, perhaps, that it is wrong for them to indulge such feelings, but they have been sorely abused, they say--and by a professed Christian, too, and they do not find it easy to divest their minds of the impression thus made. Now in such cases, an honest confession by the offending party is the natural remedy. It usually does more to remove that dreadful stumbling-block than any thing, or every thing else.

Christian reader, is any sinner stumbled thus with any sin of yours? Take care that you do not ensnare his soul to his ruin. Take care that the blood of his murdered soul be not found on your skirts!

I have sometimes known one man provoke another till he had made him angry, and then reproach him for this very anger, instead of reproaching himself or having caused it. This is cruelly wicked. The man who has thus provoked another to anger, ought to humble himself to most thorough confession, and say--"I have most meanly tempted you to sin, and then reproached you for yielding to my temptation--when I ought to have most reproached myself. I am sorry. I deplore and condemn my own wickedness."

You may perhaps recollect a case in which it is said that a man who was opposing Wesley's views of Sanctification, and who wanted to prove that a certain believer in those views was not perfectly sanctified, went and took a wash-bowl of filthy water, and threw it into his face. Now we will suppose that the injured man took offence and got angry, and seeing this, the offending party exults, and says--"Fine Sanctification this--to get angry on so slight a provocation!"

But mark how ineffably mean and wicked is the course of this tempter to sin. Let him break down and confess his own sin with shame. Let him say--I have been the guilty wretch in this matter! Let him do this, and repentance would flow freely from both their hearts.

Again, confession tends strongly to secure the prayers of those against whom you have sinned, and to whom you confess. Nothing tends more strongly to beget instantly the spirit of prayer in your behalf. How naturally they cry out--"O Lord, forgive the man, for he confesses his wrong; forgive all his sins and show him the light of thy face." The confession of our besetting sins otherwise than to an injured party, and for the purpose of getting aid to overcome them, is exceedingly useful. It usually interests our Christian brethren very much in our behalf. Who does not know how powerfully the heart is drawn out to pray for

those who in this manner confess their besetting sins? Have not you had some experience of this?

IV. What is meant by praying one for another is easily understood in this connection. It implies that we interest ourselves deeply in the spiritual welfare of those who confess their faults, and use our influence with God to secure their pardon. It is as if we were to sign a petition for their acquittal from the sentence of a broken law. Suppose your neighbor has broken the law of the State, and being convicted, is sent to State's prison for life; but he repents most deeply--gives evidence that he is a changed man, and now a petition for his pardon is laid before you for your name. Will you join in the prayer? Will you say--Does he confess his sin? If he does, I can pray for his pardon.

So when men confess their sins to God and to men, you should pray God to forgive them. God requires you to do it.

V. Obedience to this requirement implies a real spirit of forgiveness--a desire that God should forgive and an expression of this desire in real prayer to God. This is too obvious to need illustration.

In the case where besetting sins are confessed, it is implied that we interest ourselves in their sanctification and pray earnestly to God for this great result.

REMARKS.

1. Wrongs committed against the public should be confessed publicly. Of this no one can have any doubt. If confession should be made at all, it should be made to those against whom the sin is committed.

2. Wrongs against individuals may be committed either publicly or privately, and in either case the confession should correspond to the manner and publicity of the offence. If any man injures another in the public estimation, by writing a libel against him, or preaching libel against him, the sin is public, and manifestly confession of it should be co-extensive with the extent of the offence. You are bound to make the retraction as broad as the wrong done, if you can.

3. You may see why many persons never overcome their besetting sins. They are never humble and ingenuous enough to confess them, and pour out their hearts before their brethren, so as to secure their sympathy and prayers in their own behalf. They never take advantage of the great moral lever which confession puts under a man's giant sins to dig them up and roll them out and away for ever.

4. You may see the error of supposing that it is enough to confess to God, and that confession to man is useless and not required. The Catholic doctrine of confession has driven many Protestants to the opposite extreme, so that many churches are opposed to having any confessions at all made before men. But it does not follow at all that because Catholics have abused the doctrine of confession, therefore it should be all cast away. It does not follow that we are not under obligation to confess to those whom we have injured. By no means. If this principle were a just one, we should soon lose all our Bibles.

5. I have often known persons labor a long time under a load of sins unknown to others, and sins which there might have been no need of confessing, but for their great pride. But God saw that their pride must be humbled, and he could not give peace to their souls until it was. Now let such a man go to those whose good opinion he most values, and confess his sins; let him really take up his cross in this thing, and spare not his proud heart at all;--he will find it a most excellent antidote. I have often seen this done. A man goes to some person whom he esteems very highly and says--I am ensnared by my pride--it is dragging me away from God, down to hell, and I am determined it shall be subdued. So he pours out his confession of

sin.

Now this is seizing the great club to crush the serpent's head--the head of cursed pride--and it is commonly successful.

Persons in this situation will often find confession quite indispensable.

6. When in a case of personal fault both parties are to blame, one should never wait for the other to begin the confessions. Let each hasten to be most hearty and full in his own confession--then a right spirit will obtain, and each will provoke the other to good. It often happens that one holds back lest the other should make a bad use of his confessions. No matter if he does. I mean comparatively speaking it is no matter, worth a moments' regard. It is infinitely more important that you should do what is right before God, the world, and the man you have injured, than that you should withhold confession to prevent him from abusing it. Besides this there is little danger of his doing it. If he does, the responsibility is his alone.

In a case of this sort I once knew a man who said--I will confess my wrong, and if my neighbor does not choose to confess his, or pleases to make a bad use of what I confess, he must bear the responsibility alone. He poured out his confessions like water, found sweet relief and peace of soul--soon after died; that neighbor and every enemy he had, mourned over his ashes in bitterness, and confessed that there had lived at least one good man.

I have known the case of a church involved in great difficulty, pitted against each other with strong prejudices and party feelings; but ultimately the spirit of confession began to prevail; each man felt himself more to blame than his neighbor, and now the only strife was to see which should confess first and most. The controversy now was not to prove each that his neighbor was in fault, but that himself had been the chief sinner and had been the great cause both of his own sins and of his neighbor's. Every man was ready to take his hand off from his neighbor and lay it on himself. This was good. If you could have seen those humbled, confessing Christians, you would have said, it is good to come down, and get the spirit of confession.

Under such circumstances mutual confession seems to be the only thing that can save Christian character and save the church. When men have done wrong they must come down and confess their faults one to another. To see two brethren meet in the spirit of mutual confession, forgiveness and prayer is a blessed sight. God rejoices in it and every holy angel strikes a fresh note of joy and praise in heaven. It is one of the loveliest scenes ever known on earth.

Prayer offered in such circumstances is specially prevalent. Suppose you had been wronged--the wrong-doer is prosecuted, convicted, and sentenced--but in process of time becoming penitent, you are ready to forgive him and you send up your petition to the Executive for his pardon. Now who does not know that your name will have ten fold more weight because of your peculiar relation to that crime?

So it was in the case of Job and his three friends. They had spoken unkindly of him and there was good reason for their asking his forgiveness. God's wrath was kindled against them, What did he say? "Go," said he, "to my servant Job--my servant Job shall pray for you, for him will I accept." They had accused Job of being a hypocrite. Now let them make up the matter with Job and obtain his intercessions with the Lord in their behalf and they can be forgiven. He of all others is the man to pray for them. God can hear him.

Have you wronged a brother? Go, make your confession to him, and beg his prayers in your behalf. He is the man to pray for you. God can hear him. Humble yourself at his feet till he can feel a spirit of faith to pray for you; then you may hope for prayer that will avail before the Lord.

O, said a dying slaveholder, how can I die here on my bed and have no prayer offered up for my guilty soul? What shall I do? said his sympathizing wife--shall I send for the minister? No, no, said the dying man; send for my slave Tom. I have heard him pray in my barn many a time--send for him. Tom came softly in--dropped his hat under his arm--walked towards the bed;--what does Massa want? I want you Tom to pray for your dying Master, I have wronged you and robbed you of your liberty these many y[^]ears; I am sorry--O if I could live to reward you--but if you can pray for a poor lost sinner, do pray! And who would not rather have the prayers of the man he had enslaved and wronged than the prayers of all other men on earth. Such a prayer is worth a world of other prayers! But how can you have it without confession?

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