

# When We Confess Christ... What Follows From That?

## By Ron Hafer

[musical interlude]

Speaker 1:

You may be seated. Thank you Carrie and Donya. That was amazing. My name is Kathy Berhuven, assistant chaplain. Welcome to Chapel One. Chapel Two is at 10:30 in Sutherland Monday, Wednesday, Friday. And we have a couple of purposes for chapel. One of them is for you to come and receive encouragement, wisdom, and understanding from speakers who have been where we are and who have a vision for where we are going. So just sit back and drink deeply of God's love, His kindness and compassion as we worship together as a community in one body of Christ. Let's continue this morning by asking the Lord's favor on the rest of the morning and on our speaker chaplain Ron Hafer. Let's bow.

Dear gracious Heavenly Father, thank you Lord God that you meet us in this place and you allow us to speak to you face to face. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we ask that you would be glorified and magnified. Thank you for calling us to this place for such a time as this. We ask that you would look deep within our hearts, cleanse us of any of our sins, point them out to us, so that we can confess and be made right by you. Thank you Lord God. This morning we would ask that your spirit would be upon Reverend Ron Hafer, our chaplain that you would anoint him, that you would illuminate your truth, and that you would touch our hearts, our minds, our lives, and our very souls not just for this moment, not just for today, but for eternity. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

It is a pleasure to introduce Ron Hafer, the chaplain of Biola University for many many years. He has spoken throughout the United States and throughout the world from Germany to Australia. And if you've heard him speak, you probably heard him quoted as saying, "God has a way of doing amazing and remarkable things in and through ordinary people." And those of us who know Ron Hafer would not call him an ordinary man, but he might say that of himself. And God has done amazing and remarkable things in and through him. So let's give a Biola welcome to our very own chaplain, Ron Hafer.

Ron Hafer:

Kathy works for me, so she has to do that. She has to say. But I'm going to have her introduce me every time. Thank you. In fact Kathy, come up and do that again. I got a actually an email, then I got a phone call, and then I got follow-up letter from my classmates from high school. And they said, "We would like to have you there next summer for your 50th high school reunion." And I laughed, and I said, "wrong guy." And I thought, "It's me. We're indeed trouble." And as I go to these high school reunions to show you how in my high school, how irresponsible they were in choosing leaders. I was elected as student body leader. My senior year, having never held any office anywhere in life, and it showed all throughout my senior year, but did I have fun. What a hoot. It was just a riot.

And I was, believe it or not, I was little then, and very bashful, and so, what I did to cover that was to tell incredibly stupid jokes which all of my classmates remember. As I go back, I've gone to all of my high school reunions, and when they realize that God has placed this dorky little smart mouth in ministry, they just said. Because they would have me, somebody pray. You know

this scuzzy little hotel very cheap, lousy food, smoke-filled rooms in the early days, but they would have somebody pray for the meal. My classmates, they would have me. One of them thought it would just be a riot to have me do during the dinner because it was pretty raunchy stuff.

But I always went because I thought Jesus was among the pagans, and these guys are pagans, so I'll go. And they said, "Wouldn't it be really funny to have Ron, my then nickname was Buster, do a ten minute message at one of these dinners?" So, I did. And gave an invitation and told them, "You don't have to walk forward like a Billy Graham but you can let me know afterward." And quite a few of my classmates have then and since have indicated that they really had made Christ their personal Savior.

So as Kathy was sharing this, this business of God using ordinary people, it really fits what I want to share this morning because we're all, with the exception of a few, quite ordinary, regular type people, but we're extraordinary with the power of the Spirit of God in our lives. My message this morning. The title will be, because they always ask us for it, "What's the title?" Because they put it on the tape. The title on the tape will be "When We Confess Christ..." What happens when we confess Christ as Savior and Lord of our lives?

My original intro started this way. I was going to come up, thank Kathy and the worship team, thank you worship team. Kathy's gone because she's running chapel too. And she said, "Do I have to listen to both messages?" I said, "No, go." And then I was going to start, and I was going

to start by saying, because I had it in my notes for heaven's sakes. How spiritual can you get?

There are five ways that we can clearly confess Christ as Savior and Lord of our lives.

Then, as I was going over my notes, I thought, "Who wrote that?" That's so stupid. There are, we have three thousand, there are three thousand ways to confess Christ in our lives. There's only one correct answer but there are three thousand ways that this expression is being done. Please. This is another message. Please. Allow you roommate, your friends, worship team, speakers, people next to you, those who slide and glide. Please allow others in the community to express Christ in their way and smile at them if your expression is a little bit different, and say, "Allow me to express Christ. His Lordship, His Mastery in my life, my way."

Let's not be guilty of comparing with one another because when we do that, we find some yocal that isn't quite as good and they think I'm better than that person. But more often that not, the enemy puts somebody else over our head and we think we can never achieve that. There are three thousand ways to express that Jesus Christ is Lord. Only one correct answer, but multiple ways we do that in our lives, in our experience, in our habits in our lifestyles. We'll be turning to Matthew 16 often this semester, so I invite you to turn there again.

I have part of it memorized. By the end of this semester, you all may say, "I don't have to turn, I think I have this baby down." But I'm going to approach it maybe from a little earlier in the chapter. What happens when students, faculty, staff, chaplains at Biola University get really dead serious about this business of yielding everything that we are, have, and hope to be to Jesus

Christ. My life, my wife, my goals, my dreams, my desires. What happens when we do that? We do more than just sing all to Jesus I surrender.

Before my round with cancer a few years ago, I would have sung that. I would have inserted that to be very creative, but I'll spare you. Well maybe. No. We will sincerely from our hearts be able to say, "All to Jesus, I surrender." And if you're here right now, this morning at this very moment, and you really in your heart are saying that, God bless you. There will be times when you'll pull the sacrifice off of the altar. And you'll have to make that decision all over again. It's all right because our confession of Christ as Savior and Lord of every area of our lives is a process.

Dr. John Sloan from Baylor University, Robert Sloan, check the tape. Scratch John. It's Robert. Spoke at the faculty retreat down in the desert. We went down and suffered for Jesus at the Marriot for a few days. Well somebody had to do it, and this president of Baylor University. My wife went to Baylor University. You say, "Why isn't she? Is she here this morning?" She is not. You say, "Why not?" Because Hilda feels that it is unfair that she would have to write the message and have to come to listen to it twice.

I guess I will keep on using that one line. Well, she said, "Baylor? I can hardly wait to hear this guy." Dr. Robert Sloan has been the president at Baylor ten years. I'm not telling stories out of school here. He stood before us very vulnerable, this president at this prestigious school had told his story, he, in his tenure as president at Baylor felt that there have been a lot of slippage and spiritually they had lost some ground. I agreed with him. My wife agreed. We're not here you

know to cast stones. It's been difficult once Christian schools start to lose their ground, they get it back. This guy is gutsy, and I admire him. And he has done that, trying to get that ground back.

And do you know what? Thousands of Baylor alumni have cheered him on, but he said, "as I stand before you," this is just so we can have a go, he said, "I've just experienced the joy of two non votes by the faculty" and whatever the board, and he said, "by the end of the week or the month, I could easily have lost my job." And there he stands as a man who boldly confesses his faith and confidence in Jesus Christ and is trying to set the ship back on course. So in this business of confessing Christ, this is all by way of warm-up, his statement was there's something like this.

Spiritual formation, spiritual discipleship, commitment to Jesus Christ is at best a messy, sloppy process. And what's he referring to is that it's not do these five things and you're home free. He said, "If we shortcut that process, and avoid the hurt and the pain, it's going to take a lot longer in our desire to be like Jesus Christ." So what happens if we decide here this morning, "I have decided to follow Jesus, no turning back." My whole life is gonna be laid on the altar for Jesus Christ. God help us. I've made that commitment. No big deal. I'm 66\ . It's about time that I've gotten serious about this business of living totally for Jesus Christ.

I think this year would be a defining year in the history. We don't have to wait until 2008 and one hundred years. What will happen in our student body? It probably wouldn't happen with all, but just a ton of us decided, "I am going to go for it. I'm gonna go for it in every area of my life." If the guys in this student body, and I would use an illustration with the ladies if I was a little more

authoritative in that area, so I'll speak from the men. What would happen if the guys who think that lust, knowing that it's every man's battle and of giving in to it all their lives, will disavow the lie from Satan and hell, that lust has to destroy them.

And they just said to Jesus Christ, "I'm just giving you my life. I'm giving you my body. And I'm giving you my goals and dreams and no more is this going to control me." The reason I use that illustration is that's the one we hear from men the most often. Ladies, if you feel slided, come up to me afterward, tell me what your greatest problem is and I'll throw you in for the second round over in Sutherland hall. By the grace of God, may this be the year, the time when this community gets excited about openly confessing Christ as Savior and Lord of our life. My wife, I just dearly love this lady. Here's a picture.

She does discipleship with ladies, and those of you who think you would enjoy a small group, discipleship with an older lady, but she's a babe, come up and talk to me afterward. She said, couple years ago, she said, "Well you just keep talking about being aggressive and overt in our faith in Jesus Christ." She said, "Some of us aren't aggressive as you are." I said, "No, you're just," you know, she teaches and she has these little rug rats, juniors in school that she teaches. And I like to say this about juniors.

And she has witnessed her faith in Christ 30+ years, but she decided what she'd like to do is, she'd like to speak to the people who come to our door. I do. It's not I don't, I'm about 1 out of 100 from people who listen and follow through, but I just have this desire to tell people about Jesus Christ. That's why they pay me to be the chaplain. So she said I'm going to do that. I said

you're going to do what. She said I am going to be aggressive and I'm going to basically confess Christ to everybody who comes at our door for a while.

I said well God bless you honey. That's great. My neighbor came over to fix the sink. He was saying why did your neighbor come. Were you out of town? No but I have a spiritual ministry, so she called my neighbor to come, fix the sink. And because I probably am the one who screwed up the sink, so my neighbor told me this. He's there, he's working. There's the doorbell rings. Hilda looks out. And she sees a lady and her daughter with materials in a briefcase. Very well dressed.

And she said to them, our neighbor who is a Christian, still is, well he's in heaven. Never mind. So she said, this is a Jehovah's witness, do they come to your door? He said, all the time. I don't answer. She answered and he told me what happened. He said she prayed a little prayer. If you know my wife, this will be a hoot for you. She opened it and said hello. My name is Hilda. What's your name? The lady gave her name. She said I want to tell you something. I love Jesus Christ with all my heart. I'm really serious about my faith. We love our church, we've been baptized. We've given our hearts and lives. Our children we taught them about Jesus. We're very happy.

I read the Bible. And I pray. And we're just as happy as we can be with our faith. The lady said I'm from Avon. God bless you honey. My neighbor said she bought everything that lady in her basket. When we confess Christ, it comes out in the context of our life and our gifts. My granny came to faith in Jesus Christ at seventy years of age. She's home with Jesus. My granny's name is



Granny Kuku. My mother when she graduated from high school they read her diploma Kuku Esther. So my granny gave her heart to Jesus Christ and decided that she would confess Christ in her life however she could.

She spoke great German very little English, so she was in a retirement apartment. And it was one of those where you are allowed to cook for yourself. She asked me over to dinner all the time. I loved to come, but on two occasions when it was time to serve the food, it was gone. Because in the little crockpot she fixed all the other senior citizens would come and then smell Granny Kuku's soup or German kraut and she would give them a little bowl. And by the time, meal time came, it was gone.

She confessed Christ with her crockpot. Some confess Christ with their mouth. One correct answer but many many three thousand expressions of who we are and our love for Jesus Christ. You say, you said Matthew 16\ . Is there actually a proof text for this? I'm so glad you asked. In Matthew 16, I'm reading in verse 13\ . Doctor Wilkins didn't exhaust the text but at least he got us into it that convocation. I'm reading in verse 13, when Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, yes I've been there. Yes I'd love to go back. Beautiful R & R place in the holy land.

He spoke to his disciples. Who do people say the son of Man is? They replied multiple choice. Hey students, that's the question to like. There's one correct answer but he's asked but what does the Jerusalem Gazette say. What's the word on the street. So my guess is that they probably had

50 answer but Matthew gives us three. They reply some say John the Baptist. That's nice. John is dead. He's been beheaded but never mind. Is John back from the dead? Not bad.

Jesus said he's the greatest that ever lived. That no man greater. So that isn't bad. Unless you're the son of God. Then it falls forth never mind. Others say Elijah. Still other say Jeremiah or one of the prophets. Woah. Now he goes from preaching to meddling. What about you? And it doesn't say that he stopped, smiled, put up his hand and said okay enough. Enough. Thank you for all those incorrect answers. And then he kind of eyeballed him one by one. Big browns. I picture brown. Into theirs. Looking right beyond their eyes into their hearts and I say what about you.

We're not looking at a doctrinal close answer only. We're looking for an answer to the question, Who do you say I am? And how does it show in your life? Gulp. What about you? Who do you say I am? Simon Peter answered. I love Simon Peter. Dr. Wilkins in convocation warned us not to mess with his man. But we love to make references to Simon Peter and most of us seem to identify with him because prior to the coming of the Holy Spirit, and even shortly after, he was a major screw up. And may I say, so are you. And so am I.

We identify when we have chapel speakers and on occasion they tell story, the stories of your life. When I speak with him, I say don't tell he wrote stories, don't tell them how you caught the past and ran the 100 yards and you were. Stand up and tell them how you messed up because most of us learn but from this. Simon Peter was a major screw up. Kathy's introduction couldn't

have been better. God through Christ handpicked very average individuals, ordinary to do extraordinary work for him. Hope you journal, so you can write down.

I'll share the journal of one of our students in just a moment. Simon Peter so there's an open end time in the discussion. Simon Peter answered. Probably looked around, no other hands are up. We in our classes have individuals don't smile at them or nudge them but they're the ones if there's a quiet moment, they'll just insert something. Sometimes anything. They are the ones sometimes props up to say you only get three questions during the semester because I don't have time for all of that. God bless those who are curious.

But God bless those who are Simon Peter types. Usually when he spoke, the disciples would probably nudge one another and say, Get ready this is going to be. This might probably be a classic because he missed it most of the time. The speed readers that have gone over onto the next page 820 821, you would have already found a screw up. It happened about 5 minutes later, but this is his moment. This is his moment in the sun. Who do you say that I am. Any takers?

Simon Peter, yo Pete Simon shifting sand. Vacillator. That's what his name means. Peter speed readers have found petrosed the rock. Ta ta ta. That wasn't bad. Never mind. Which name would you prefer? Right? Call me Peter the rock. So Simon Peter speaks up. The other disciples look and listen. We know the story and we know how it ends. But this is a remarkable confession at this point. Peter booming Jett Dixon to the King James. Thou art the Christ. The son of the living God. Maybe with a little vibratome. The Living God.

I mean he is that was his commitment. That was his confession of Christ. There are two confessions in the chapter by the way. The other one he missed by a mile. Jesus to Simon Peter shifting his hand. Vacillator Simon! What? You're right. I am. I won't do the back and forth. Come on up and no never mind. But that was an amazing moment. Flesh and blood didn't reveal this to you. Can you picture Simon Peter open mouth insert foot saying something even if it's wrong.

Can you imagine Simon Peter and this glorious moment where he's being not only high fived by the Lord Jesus but he's being praised for his statement. It's more than he can handle. He's about to pop the buttons off of his toe gun. He nailed it. He did it. And he did it in the power of God. And it's so exciting. And Scripture should say in Matthew 16, and from that moment on, it was never the same with Peter but it was never the same until five minutes later. I mean Jesus gave and others will develop this passage of the kings of the kingdom and this business of what it really means with authority from God the Holy Spirit.

But basically that authority is ours. So Jesus says to him, now everybody come in close and then he shared the passage that most of us know. It may not be memorized but it's a tough one. Like Wilkins addressed it on Monday, Matt Cursh, our president referred to it Wednesday and yesterday in the Thursday chapel. The preacher preached on the backside of the same idea that this business of spiritual formation, confessing Jesus Christ in every area of our life is at best sloppy, messy business. Not neat but challenging. Often times tough.

And if we side step the hurt and the tough times, we miss the process because Jesus said if any man, woman, boy or girl come after me, let him deny himself, take of his cross daily and follow me. The one who seeks to save his life will lose it. The one who loses his life for my sake and the gospels, the same will save it. For what shall it profit us if we gain the whole world, we lose our own souls, or what shall be given exchange for our souls. But before that happened, Peter drew Jesus aside. Jesus simply said, going to go to the cross, going to die, one of three clear times, where he taught that.

Simon Peter, rocky, the rock ta-ta-ta. The one who had been so praised by the Savior moments before. Phillips' translation says drew him aside and said to him God bless you master. This must never happen to you. You've got to get over this death syndrome. You know. You're the Messiah. And we're going to be with you. James and John said we'll sit on the right and left. Their motives weren't always pure. And Jesus said to Simon Peter not get behind me rocky, get behind me Satan.

It's possible in the same day in the same conversation to confess Christ as Savior and Lord and act like an absolute heretic. The key is sensitivity to the Spirit of God and complete yieldedness to his will, his sovereign will in your life and mine even when the going gets tough. If I can ever stand, but if she's here, I want Elizabeth McGovern to raise her hand. There she is. Thank you Elizabeth. She's given me permission to read this. She's going to share her story later when she has the strength and energy.

With this I close, my name is Elizabeth McGovern. And this was an email to the Biola community subtitled God is so cool. Many are familiar with that name because you faithfully prayed for me the past four months. This was written in April or after April. Thank you all so much. For those of you who do not know, I went into the hospital on April 14 last year because it was hard to breathe. It turns out I had a deadly case of viral pneumonia. We were praying in this chapel and on this campus that Elizabeth would live through the night at 24 hours at a time.

It turns out that pneumonia things got very bad after about three days. Both my lungs collapsed, so we heard that and we were praying because we hoped she would live long enough for there to be a lung transplant because that's what had come to us from people who were visiting. I had about 50% chance of survival. Then, I got another disease that poisoned my blood and the percentage dropped even more. God miraculously brought me through that critical stage. He's honored countless prayers and blessed my life abundantly. I have been out of the hospital for about a month and been recovering very well. There was a chance that I might need a lung transplant, but I still have both my lungs. And although I get out of breath easily, it is okay. The doctors say I should regain most of my strength after three months in the hospital and many uncertainties. The Lord did so many miracles. He blessed my family. Drew us closer to him. The doctors and nurses were able to see God work in things they could not explain. He gave me comfort in the midst of all of this. For about a month, I was asleep. That's one way of saying unconscious or in a coma.

We were praying that she would have simply lived through the coma and the next couple of months, I was unable to speak. As a hired mouth, that's a part that would scare me the most

because I haven't written any books. So there she was. Unconscious, unable to speak. When I regained some strength and could write again, all communication was limited. Sometimes I was so lonely, but then I would be reminded that Jesus was right there with me. He is so good.

[audience clapping]

You know what she has done. She has confessed the power of God. She's confessed Christ in her life. There's a song that I used to sing but I have chosen somebody who is better and it's entitled He is Lord. Just sing that together as we conclude.

[musical interlude]

Jesus Christ, you are our savior and Lord. We own you as that. And we go from this pit place confessing you in every area of our lives. Jesus' strong name and all God's people say. By the authority vested in me, you are dismissed.