

Confirmation Theology Year, Week Five  
October 13: Sin, Confession

- What is your favorite snack?
  
- What is Sin?

Listen to Mumford and Sons “Hopeless Wanderer”

“Hopeless Wanderer” by Mumford and Sons

You heard my voice, I came out of the woods by choice  
Shelter also gave their shade  
But in the dark I have no name

So leave that click in my head  
And I will remember the words that you said  
Left a clouded mind and a heavy heart  
But I am sure we could see a new start

So when your hopes on fire  
But you know your desire  
Don't hold a glass over the flame  
Don't let your heart grow cold  
I will call you by name  
I will share your road

But hold me fast, hold me fast  
'Cause I'm a hopeless wanderer  
And hold me fast, hold me fast  
'Cause I'm a hopeless wanderer

I wrestled long with my youth  
We tried so hard to live in the truth  
But do not tell me all is fine  
When I lose my head, I lose my spine

So leave that click in my head  
And I won't remember the words that you said  
You brought me out from the cold  
Now, how I long, how I long to grow old

So when your hope's on fire  
But you know your desire  
Don't hold a glass over the flame  
Don't let your heart grow cold  
I will call you by name  
I will share your road

But hold me fast, hold me fast  
'Cause I'm a hopeless wanderer  
And hold me fast, hold me fast  
'Cause I'm a hopeless wanderer  
I will learn, I will learn to love the skies I'm under  
And I will learn, I will learn to love the skies I'm under  
The skies I'm under

Questions:

What does it mean to be a "hopeless wanderer"?

Imagine this song as a conversation between yourself and God. Even though we may wander away, Jesus promises to "share our road."

What are some ways we wander away from God? Does God wander away from US?

Tell a story about a time someone stuck with you, even though you were moving away from the "road" you were sharing.

- Watch the following video:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=laPMGIK6rPY>
  - This is often how we are taught to think about sin, as going our own way instead of God's. This is individual sin.
  - Sin as stuff we do wrong.
  - Although a simple description, this is part of what sin is.
- Sin is bound up in God's hope for us, and ways we are not able to do what God hopes.
- Lutheran Understandings about Sin.
  - Part of human nature is being caught in a net of sin.

- We cannot believe in God, follow God's commandments, do what God hopes for us on our own. We need God.
- We are forgiven by God's grace, the net has been cut—God doesn't judge us based on sin—but it is still present, and we are still caught in it. We live in the tension.
- Sin is collective, systemic, as well as individual.
- We confess in community; it is important to be honest with God and neighbor and to seek forgiveness.
- Idea One: Part of human nature is being caught in a net of sin.
- Where does sin come from?
- Read Genesis 3:1-7
- Questions:
  - Why did God say not to eat from the tree?
  - What did the serpent say would happen if they tried it?
  - When someone tells you that you can't do something or forbids it, does that make you want to do it? Why or why not?
- The rest of the story...
  - So, then God was walking around in the garden, and they heard God. So, they hid. They didn't want God to know what they had done. But God called out to the man and was all, "Dude. Where are you?" SO, then, Adam came out and said, "Um, we were hiding. Because we're naked, and we were embarrassed." So then God says, "Who told you that you are naked? DID YOU EAT FROM THAT TREE?" SO, the man blames the woman, the woman blames the serpent, and God says this:
- Read Genesis 3:14-24
- Questions:
  - What were the consequences for Adam and Eve's decision?
  - This is the root of the sin that grows and blooms all over our world and our lives in all sorts of places and ways.

- Genesis is an origin story to help us make sense of Sin. The creation story doesn't tell us "What happened"; it tells us "what always happens"
- Idea two: We cannot believe in God, follow God's commandments, do what God hopes for us on our own. We need God.
- Read Exodus 20:1-17
- Questions:
  - What do the ten commandments have in common?
  - Part of sin causes us to turn inward toward ourselves. Are the ten commandments about turning inward or reaching out toward our neighbor? Which do you think God wants?
- Read Romans 3:9-20
- Sin can be individual things we do that are against what God hopes for us. We all know about this.
- Sin activity: Think of all the ways you "miss the mark", these individual sins in your life. Write them down on a piece of paper.
- Idea three: We are forgiven by God's grace, the net has been cut—God doesn't judge us based on sin—but it is still present, and we are still caught in it. We live in the tension.
- Read Romans 7:14-25
- Questions:
  - When have you had trouble doing the "right" thing?
  - Do you ever regret decisions you make?
  - Have you ever felt like you knew what you wanted to do and you weren't able to do it? When?
- Tension Activity: Let's make a list. What are God's values?

- Is this what we see around us in the world?
- So, Jesus has freed us from being judged for sin, and forgives us, but we are still caught.
- Idea Four: Sin is collective, systemic, as well as individual.
  - We often think of sin as thing we do wrong, “missing the mark.”
- What is Sin? What are systems?
  - The world is filled with this reality of systems of oppression--people who benefit (privilege) and people who are harmed (oppression); this is always related to unequal power. This is sin on a grand scale, and we participate in it all the time.
  - These systems often began and were strengthened by individual decisions, and are continued by individual decisions, but now they have taken on a life of their own.
- One way to think about sin is the lie of “not enough.”
  - I am not enough.
  - There is not enough.
  - These two lies which we take to be true breed shame, comparison, and scarcity.
  - So, our beautiful, complicated human brains make choices and judgements
    - “She is beautiful/I am ugly.” “He is dumb/I am smart”. “What he has is better than what I have. I want it.” “There is not enough food/jobs/prosperity to go around for all of us; they’re not welcome here.”
  - These narratives are created and fueled by the power of sin in the world which keeps us from abundant life which God intends.
- Read John 10:10
- Take your paper out, and write on the blank side some of these “systemic” problems that we are part of (hunger, poverty, racism, sexism, etc.)
- Finally: We confess in community; it is important to be honest with God and neighbor and to seek forgiveness.
  - Keeping our sin a secret causes us to feel shame; “I am bad/I am sinful/I am wrong”. Then, we are like Adam and Eve hiding in the garden, trying to keep our sin secret from God.
  - So, God calls us to share our brokenness, to confess the ways we have “missed the mark,” and God promises to liberate and forgive us.
  - The practice of being brave and honest about hard things is called vulnerability.

- Watch the following video:
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZkDaKKkFi6Y>
- Questions:
  - Why is it scary to “show up, be seen, even when there are no guarantees”?
  - Is that what happens in confession, or do we have a guarantee from God? What does God promise?
- Summing it Up:
  - sins are individual actions
  - Sin is both individual and systemic.
  - God does not judge us based on our sin; we are forgiven, but we are still caught.
  - We practice vulnerability with God and one another in confession
- Confession.
  - Take your papers from in front of you and pray the following prayer:
  - **God, we know that we are caught in sin and cannot free ourselves. We do not do what you hope for us, we do not always think that we are enough, or that there is enough to go around, and although we know what you desire for us, we are not always able to do those things and respond to your grace. We confess that we are caught in sin, and we are vulnerable before you, as we give our sin to you...**
    - *Read the things you have written on both sides of your paper out loud.*
  - **Through the power of grace and mercy, and the resurrection of Jesus, God forgives our sin. We are freed from the net of sin; we have been cut loose, and forgiven, ready to live our abundant life of grace in the world, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.**
  - **AMEN**