

Title: PROFESSIONS OF FAITH, MATTHEW 16:13-20  
(Chatham, NJ; 08/21/11, AM) [E – Topical]

Theme: Individual, public professions of faith derive their theological significance from professions in the Gospels.

Purpose: To elicit the same profession from those who haven't made it and to encourage those who already have made it.

Introduction:

1. Marriage vows demonstrate the importance of public, verbal commitments.
2. Jesus not only asked the disciple to say what they believed, but his life also demands a yea or nay statement from all people.
3. 1 Timothy 6:12 demonstrates that making a "good confession" was a part of becoming a disciple in the early days.
4. It could have been, "Jesus is Lord," or something similar. (Jesus is the Son of God, the Christ, etc.) Equating it with eternal life is no accident.
5. It also equates to a public commitment to a life of discipleship; note that there were many witnesses to his good confession.
6. When we recognize who Jesus is, it evokes a verbal commitment from us.
7. Consider some early confessions of the faith.

I. Peter's Confession, Mt. 16:13 – 20 (note: I equate profession and confession in this lesson)

A. Pre-confessions

1. The witness of the apostles took some time to develop.
2. John 1:35-49, Andrew (41, Messiah), Philip (45, the one Moses and the prophets wrote about), Nathanael (49, Son of God and King of Israel).
3. John 2:11, his disciples believed in him.
4. Mark 4:41, "Who is this, that even the wind and sea obey him?"
5. Matthew 14:33, "Truly you are the Son of God."

B. Peter's confession

1. A different setting than that evoked by Jesus walking on the water (chap. 14)
2. Jesus asked, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?"
3. Then he asked them, "But who do you say that I am?"
4. He asked them to say it.
5. Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."
6. Jesus insists that this revelation has come from God.
7. The rock is the profession of faith, not Peter.
8. That profession has become the cornerstone of Christian belief.

II. Martha's confession, John 11:23-27

A. Belief in Jesus

1. Several comments establish her faith.
2. "If you had been here, my brother would not have died," 21.
3. "Whatever you ask from God, God will give you," 22.
4. Speaking of her brother, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day," 24.
5. Yet Jesus presses her for more.

B. Her confession

1. "I am the resurrection and the life," 25.
2. Jesus makes several other comments about belief and eternal life, 25-26.

3. Life, death, and faith are the issues of the moment, and ultimately the issues that press upon all of us.
4. Jesus formulates ideas about himself and asks her if she believes them, 26.
5. Her response is as definitive and complete as Peter's, 27.

### III. The centurion at the cross, Mark 15:39

#### A. What he saw

1. The darkness, 33
2. The loud cry of Jesus, 37
3. The curtain torn, 38 (commentators suggest that because he stood facing Jesus he could also see the Temple curtain)
4. He breathed his last "in this way," 39
5. "Truly this man was the Son of God," he said.
6. The events evoked this response from him.

#### B. What he professed, 39

1. Not the same meaning that would be invested in this terminology by later Christian confessions (he was God by nature, etc.)
2. But at least that Jesus had a unique relation to God
3. And still a fitting remark evoked from a pagan to what he saw
4. When others standing by do not believe, a Roman soldier does.

#### Conclusion:

1. What do you believe about Jesus?
2. For those who have been disciples for some time, do you still believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God?
3. Such a commitment binds us to follow his way of life.
4. It also orders our life around it because we can't profess it without being changed and challenged to obey him.
5. Many before us have believed and professed; let us continue in their footsteps.