

**Chapter 26 of the 1689 Confession of Faith: “Of The Church”,**  
**Session # 12, “Making Profession of His Name”, Presented by**  
**Pastor Paul Rendall in the Adult Sunday School,**  
**on March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2018.**

**The 1689 Confession, Chapter 26: “Of the Church”**

**Paragraph 3 will once again be our focus today –**

**3.** The purest churches under heaven are subject to mixture and error; and some have so degenerated as to become no churches of Christ, but synagogues of Satan; nevertheless Christ always hath had, and ever shall have a kingdom in this world, to the end thereof, of such as believe in him, and make profession of his name.

(d) 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 5; Revelation 2-3; (e) Revelation 18: 2; 2<sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians 2: 11-12; (f) Matthew 16: 18;

Psalms 72: 17; 102: 28; Revelation 12: 17

**Acts 11: 19-26** – “Now those who were scattered after the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to no one but the Jews only. But some of them were men from Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they had come to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord. Then news of these things came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch. When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord. For he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord. Then Barnabas departed for Tarsus to seek Saul. And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.”

Now, you can see here that many who were members of the church in Jerusalem fled the city after the persecution that arose over Stephen and they traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to no one but the Jews only. But some of the men from Cyprus and Cyrene, when they came to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists, preaching the Lord Jesus, and the hand of the Lord was with them and a great number believed and turned to the Lord. And you will notice that when this news reached the ears of the church in Jerusalem that they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch. The first local church did not leave all of these newly converted people to fend for themselves spiritually but they were encouraged and taught by Barnabas that forming themselves into a local church there was the God-ordained, God-appointed thing to do. This was how they would “continue” with the Lord, as it says in verse 23. And in verse 26 we find that when Barnabas had found Saul, he brought him to Antioch, and they assembled with the church there and taught a great many people. These people were true disciples because they were living their Christian lives following Christ and apostolic teaching. And therefore, this is where the disciples were first called Christians. They had made profession of faith in the initial time of their conversion to Christ, but they also continued on to prove and establish the truth of their profession of faith, by living the life of a Christian. They didn’t go their own way, living their lives apart from any church, but they joined the church in Antioch, and assembled with them regularly and walked together with each other in the context of this local church.

**I. Christ's Kingdom of Grace is based upon the Covenant of Grace made between Christ and believers. His will as King of the Universal Church is being outworked in time and space, in the context of the Local Church. Local churches are the visible representation of Christ's kingdom in this world,**

**I was attempting to show you over the past few sessions that**– Christ's Mediatorial Kingdom was bestowed upon Him by the Father in the Covenant of Redemption before the world began. The fulfillment of this covenant was entirely resting upon Christ and His righteousness. But the application of redemption, and the gathering of sinners into this Kingdom, takes place through the outworking of the covenant of grace, by the believer covenanting together with Christ. This began, I said to you, through Christ's statement in Luke 22: 29 – "I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed one upon Me." Christ's bestowing a kingdom upon the apostles, was His giving to them the keys of the kingdom; by His appointing them to be the ones who would, through their labors in the word and doctrine, set forth all of the truth related to the gospel and the preaching of the word of God, to complete the canon of Scriptures, handing that truth to faithful men who would be able to teach others also. With this foundation laid, then in all subsequent generations until the end of the world, through the preaching and teaching of pastor-teachers, Christ through the instrumentality of His Church, composed of local churches, would gather a people for God's own possession, out of every tribe and nation. And He would have them to be admitted into local churches by their profession of faith in His name; that being the basis of their salvation. And then after being baptized in His name, and evaluated by the pastors and the people making up that local church, as to the credibility of their testimony of faith in Christ, and their willingness to submit to the authority of the word of God in living their lives, they then become members of the local church. All of this is the outworking of the Covenant of Grace, spiritually speaking, between Christ and themselves.

**Jonathan Edwards says in Vol. 20, Entry 1064, P. 445, in his Works, concerning the COVENANT OF GRACE –**

"That the parties covenanting in the covenant of grace are Christ and his church, or spiritual spouse, is manifest from the fact that this covenant is called a testament in Scripture, and compared to a will that is confirmed by the death of the testator. Now the testator that died was Christ, and not God the Father. If the covenant of grace was His will and testament to his church, then Christ and the church are the parties contracting. "That the parties contracting in the covenant of redemption are the Father and the Son, but the parties contracting in the covenant of grace, Christ and believers, is what seems to be taught in that **Luke 22:29**, "καγω διατιθεμαι υμιν καθως διεθετο μοι ο πατηρ μου βασιλειαν, **I do by covenant dispose unto you a kingdom, as my father by covenant disposed unto me.**" "For the word διατιθεμαι properly signifies to covenant, or make a contract or testament, or to appoint or dispose by covenant or testament. This is the word used, in Acts 3: 25, "Ye are the children of the prophets and of the covenant which God made (διαθησομαι) with our fathers." So Hebrews 8:10, "This is the covenant I will make (διαθησομαι) with the house of Israel." Therefore, the noun διαθηκη that comes of this verb signifies covenant, which is the word translated "covenant" in the New Testament.

**II. Now, this morning I want to take you a step further and show you how Christ's kingdom and Covenant of Grace relates to making profession of His name before the members of a local church.**

**1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 6: 11-16** – “But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession (KJV - has professed a good profession) in the presence of many witnesses. I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things, and before Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate, that you keep this commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing, which He will manifest in His own time, He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen.

Each individual New Testament church would be composed of persons who have personally covenanted with Christ themselves, for salvation and grace, and their having had salvation wrought in their hearts, this would lead them, in accordance with the Spirit's working, to desire to become members of a local church of their choice; that church that would, in their mind, best represent what God's word sets forth to them, in doctrine and practice. Christ builds His visible Church upon the earth, in accordance with the Covenant of Grace. Church authority which was given to the apostles, and then subsequently also to the called ministers of Christ (pastor-teachers) to continue, would be exercised in opening the door of the church to any professed believer, upon their confession of Christ and their having repented of their sins. And once they had submitted their testimony of faith to the scrutiny of the elders of the church and to the church itself, they would be baptized and welcomed into that church as members. This is God's Biblical plan and path that believers should walk upon.

Therefore, we should understand that each individual sinner who believes in the truth of the gospel is covenanting with Christ personally; that is, they are giving themselves to believe in the gospel and to take Jesus as their only Savior and Lord. They are then saved and brought into the Universal Church, having met the conditions of the gospel, and the conditions for entrance into the local church; that they will join with that church which has preached the word of God to them. The only conditions for joining a local church are – Repenting of their sins, and believing in the message of the gospel, and having a desire and willingness to join with others of like precious faith, to follow the Lord in all things, according to the truth of word of God, the Bible. This is their profession of faith and the outworking of the Covenant of Grace in living their lives to God and to Christ. The two parties covenanting in the covenant of grace are Christ and the Church. All of the covenanting that takes place between Christ and a believer is to culminate in the believer's joining a local church, and following Christ together with the believers in that church, all of which will show forth the fact that they have recognized the importance of obedience to God's word, and that they have, by faith, become a part of Christ's mystical Bride, the Church Universal. Having been placed in the Universal Body of Christ by the Holy Spirit's working in regeneration, they now consciously choose to become a member of a local expression of that body.

**John Calvin says on 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 6: 12** – “**And hast confessed a good confession**” - “By mentioning his former life, the Apostle excites him still more to persevere; for to give way, after having begun well, is more disgraceful than never to have begun. To Timothy, who had hitherto acted valiantly, and had obtained applause, he addresses this powerful argument, that the latter end should correspond to the beginning. By the word confession I understand not that which is expressed in words, but rather what is actually performed; and that not in a single instance merely, but throughout his whole ministry. The meaning therefore is: “Thou hast many witnesses of thy illustrious confession, both at Ephesus and in other countries, who have beheld thee acting faithfully and sincerely in the profession of the gospel; and, therefore, having given

such a proof of fidelity, thou canst not, without the greatest shame and disgrace, shew thyself to be anything else than a distinguished soldier of Christ." By this passage we are taught in general, that the more any of us excels, the less excusable is he if he fail, and the stronger are his obligations to God to persevere in the right course.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 2: 8-10** – "Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel, for which I suffer trouble as an evildoer, even to the point of chains; but the word of God is not chained. Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory."

**2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 2: 19-22** – "Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity." But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor. Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work. Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart."