



## **Luke, Week 60**

### **"Acknowledging Christ"**

#### **By Pastor Bill Alderson**

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### **Luke 12:8-9 (ESV)**

Acknowledge Christ Before Men

<sup>8</sup>“And I tell you, everyone who acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man also /will acknowledge before the angels of God, <sup>9</sup>but the one who denies me before men will be denied before the angels of God.

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### **Intro**

- **Well, it’s that time of year again.**
- **Christmas is over. We’ve basked in the glow of Advent and celebration of the birth of Christ.**  
**Now, life begins to return to normal.**  
**And you realize that in two more days a new year begins.**
- **It’s at this time of year our minds start looking towards the future.**
  - **What will this next year be like?**
  - **What do I want to accomplish?**
  - **Where do I want to go?**
  - **What will my goals be?**
- **And, inevitably we start thinking about making a few “New Year’s Resolutions”**
- **It’s generally accepted that making New Year's Resolutions was started by early Babylonians.**



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---

- For the Babylonians, the start of the new year was a good time to return borrowed items, such as farming equipment and pay debts, and so begin the new year with a clean slate.
- Some believe that New Year's resolutions began as promises made to the Babylonian gods, negotiating or bargaining in the hope that the gods would grant some favor in return, such as a good harvest.
- It was also believed that breaking of New Year's resolution brought bad luck. After all, keeping it or breaking a resolution is in your hands, right?
- **As Christians, though, we have a different take on the concept of Resolutions. Let's look to see what the scripture says:**
- **2 Thessalonians 1:11-12**  
<sup>11</sup>To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power, <sup>12</sup> so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.
- We see here clearly that it is God who fulfills every resolve – for good, and for every work of faith.
- This is done through God's power.
- With the start of a new year, it's natural to want to do better than last year, **but it's the this source for motivation to keep the resolution that is important.**
- Maybe you're determined to lose weight, or pray more, or read the Bible more, or volunteer more.
- **These resolutions will fail without correct motivation.**



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---

- During the time of Advent, we celebrated more than just the birth of our savior, we celebrated the gift that his birth represents. Salvation. Hope. Peace. Joy.
- Jesus was born, and it changed everything, and He continues to change everything through his work on the Cross.
- And as a Christian, accepting Christ into your life should change things. The Gospel of Jesus Christ provides a motivation unlike any you will find in any self-help book or motivational speaker.
- So this leads us to where we pick back up in Luke, chapter 12, verses 8 and 9.
- **Luke 12:8-9 (ESV)**  
<sup>8</sup> "And I tell you, everyone who acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man also will acknowledge before the angels of God, <sup>9</sup> but the one who denies me before men will be denied before the angels of God.
- I'm not one to believe in chance, I believe God is sovereign in all things, and I believe he ordained for this verse to be read here today.
- Church, if you're seeking a resolution for 2020, let it be this:  
**We must acknowledge Jesus before men in our day-to-day life.**  
If we expect Him to own us as His saved people at the last day, we must profess Christ!
- We must let all people see that we believe in Jesus, and serve Jesus, and love Jesus.
- And that we care more for the praise of Jesus than for the praise of man.
- Proclaiming Jesus is not held in reserve for great occasions – like the Christmas holiday – but for our every-day walk through a world that is against Him.



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- Amongst your family. Amongst your friends. At your work. At your school. In your home – each of us must be prepared to confess our Savior.
- And nothing more is required than using the daily opportunity we receive to while interacting with others. Because if we love Jesus, we can't be ashamed to let people know it.
- Many people have the idea that as long as I have "Jesus in my heart" then I'm ok.
- And often connected to that idea is the thought that my faith can be a "private thing."
- It's between "*me and Jesus*."  
*Whether I share my faith publicly, whether I ever mention my faith, whether there are any outward manifestations of my faith is immaterial.*
- The idea of a private faith that doesn't need to be known by anyone else is simply false. Real faith is going to come out. We are not going to be able to keep it hidden.
- As Christians, it is important that we acknowledge that confessing Christ has always been difficult. It has never been without opposition at any period in our history. Proclaiming Jesus to the unsaved is sure to elicit laughter, ridicule, contempt, mockery, enmity, and persecution.
- **John 15:18-19 – The Hatred of the World**  
**<sup>18</sup> "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. <sup>19</sup> If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.**
- **We know that the wicked have always hated the Just.**  
And the world which hated Christ will always hate Christians.



## Luke, Week 60

### "Acknowledging Christ"

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---

- Christians in generations before us were sometimes put to death for saying, "Jesus Christ is Lord" rather than calling some other ruler "Lord." And still today, around the world, many Christians are suffering terrible things and even dying for their faith.
- However, the significance of our confessing Christ is revealed most clearly by **Jesus' own words**. He promised that he would claim us — that we are his — before the Father if we claim him now while we are here on earth.
- So take hope, Brothers and Sisters, our God is Great, and **we are not alone**, or left to do things at our own will.
- Later in John 15, Jesus reinforces this by saying:
- **John 15:26-27**  
**<sup>26</sup> "But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me. <sup>27</sup> And you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning.**
- Understanding these verses is important to build out our confidence in our faith. We are not alone in this, the Holy Spirit is with us each and every day

### The Art of Making Resolutions

- So what does all this have to do with making resolutions? Let's stop for a moment here to talk about the **Art of making resolutions...**
- Many of you are familiar with Jonathan Edwards, but for those of you who are not, Edwards was a Christian preacher, philosopher, and theologian who lived from 1703 til 1758.
- Edwards "is widely acknowledged to be America's most important and original philosophical theologians, and one of America's greatest intellectuals, and a stimulator of the religious revival known as the "Great Awakening,"



## Luke, Week 60 "Acknowledging Christ" By Pastor Bill Alderson

---

- Author [Stephen Nichols](#) describes Edwards like this:
- *Church historian Sean Lucas once pointed out that there was a time when Jonathan Edwards wasn't "Jonathan Edwards." That is to say, there was a time before Edwards was the great theologian and pastor that he is now known to be. In 1722 and 1723, during his nineteenth year, he was just Jonathan Edwards. The Great Awakening and his involvement in it, the publication of *Religious Affections*, *Life of Brainerd*, and *Freedom of the Will* — not to mention many other books, sermons, and writings enough to fill many shelves — the missionary work at Stockbridge, and the presidency of Princeton University (then known as the College of New Jersey), were all off in the distance. That Jonathan Edwards, the subject of many books, dissertations, conferences, and even websites, was not yet. At age nineteen, Jonathan Edwards was the potential "Jonathan Edwards."*
- *He was a young man unsure of his future. He had many gifts and not a few options before him. His father and grandfather were ministers, as were uncles and others in the family tree. He had a first-rate education, one of the finest of the day, so he was well-prepared for a future in the halls of the academy, should he so choose. He even had a penchant for science and perhaps could have headed off in that direction.*
- *But for the time being he was a pastor, a young pastor at that. Eighteen going on nineteen, he found himself far from his native soil of the Connecticut River Valley in the throes of a church split in a Presbyterian church in New York City. He had been invited to pastor the minority faction somewhere along the docks of the city's harbor. New York City wasn't nearly as busy in 1722, the year in question, as it is now. The population hovered around just under ten thousand. For a young man from the idyllic setting of small town New England, however, it was a place unlike any he had ever seen.*



## Luke, Week 60

### "Acknowledging Christ"

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---

- *Amidst all of this uncertainty and flux, this young man, Jonathan Edwards, needed both a place to stand and a compass for some direction. So he took to writing. He kept a diary and he penned some guidelines, which he came to call his "Resolutions." These resolutions would supply both that place for him to stand and a compass to guide him as he made his way.<sup>1</sup>*
- The result is a series of 70 resolutions. Edwards would re-read this list at least once a week to keep his mind focused and renewed. The result: A man of humble godliness, who was to become a significant spark used to ignite one of the greatest Christian revivals known to history.
- I would like to introduce you to the first resolution on Edward's list:
- *Resolved, that I will do whatsoever I think to be most to God's glory, and my own good, profit and pleasure, in the whole of my duration, without any consideration of the time, whether now, or never so many myriad's of ages hence. Resolved to do whatever I think to be my duty and most for the good and advantage of mankind in general. Resolved to do this, whatever difficulties I meet with, how many and how great soever.*  
– Jonathan Edwards, 1722

### Developing Confidence In Our Faith

- The wonderful thing about studying men like Edwards is understanding that they, **much like ourselves**, struggled with the same day-to-day trials of being a Christian.
- Edwards wrote his resolutions not as grand proclamations to the people, but as a way to **remind himself** of the true motivation provided through the Gospel.
- In that light, as we look back to our verse in Luke, I want to discuss three ways that we can acknowledge Jesus

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/resolutions-jonathan-edwards/>



## Luke, Week 60

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1. Can you acknowledge the depth of forgiveness that He has provided for you?

○ **1 John 3:1-3**

○ <sup>1</sup> See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. <sup>2</sup> Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. <sup>3</sup> And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

○ Here, John shows us that through the act of Jesus on the cross, God calls us the children, and that what we will be has not yet appeared. But we know that it will be like Christ.

○ In Romans, Also, Paul explains how we have been made into new creatures through Christ and that we have been given the Holy Spirit within us so that we can live victorious Christian lives.

2. Can you acknowledge how far has He brought you in spiritual maturity?

○ **Philippians 1:6**

6 And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

○ Another driving force is the spiritual maturity that Christ brings.

○ How much have you grown spiritually as a Christian through the power of Christ in your life?

○ The more that God has changed us, the more thankful we are to Him. The more God has matured us, the more passionate we're going to be about Him.





## Luke, Week 60 "Acknowledging Christ" By Pastor Bill Alderson

---

### 3. Can you acknowledge the blessings He's brought to you through prayer?

- **Ephesians 3:20-21**  
<sup>20</sup> Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, <sup>21</sup> to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.
- When we think of the ways that God has answered our prayers, providing what we've needed in a whole host of situations, it makes us incredibly grateful to Him.
- On the other hand, when we treat prayer as a spare tire, only to be used in a worst-case, last-resort situation, it's not surprising that we can't point to any situations where He's answered.

### Closing

**In 2020, resolve to Acknowledge Jesus in your daily life, and to share the joy and amazement at your association with Him!**

- At the end of the day, think about the ways in which we might "acknowledge" Jesus on a daily basis. If we consider these things, we should be overjoyed and amazed at our association with Jesus.
- I've said it before and I'll say it again, we need to reclaim the word "Awesome"
- That He would call us **His friend** – that's awesome!
- That He would receive us into **His Kingdom** – that's awesome!
- That He would let us **serve Him and bring glory to Him** – that's awesome!



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- When we consider the opportunity and the gift that He has given us, we should **go far beyond merely** being willing to "acknowledge" – we should be **overjoyed and eager** to tell anyone who'll listen.
- May this truth bring great assurance and an invincible joy and strength and courage into your life.
- Let us pray...

### COMMUNION

### BENEDICTION

#### Hebrews 13:20–21

*Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.*