

A Conscience Void of Offence

by Hans R. Waldvogel

The sermon emphasizes the importance of having a conscience void of offense, which is achieved by exercising oneself to have a quickened conscience, listening to the Holy Spirit, and making a deep inward attention to the indwelling of the Son of God.

Duration: 25:04

Scripture: Psalm 139:9, Acts 24:14

Topics: "Conscience"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher reflects on the authority of Jesus and his ability to demand a wholehearted surrender from believers. He uses the example of Jesus driving out the money changers from the temple to illustrate this authority. The preacher also discusses the importance of being filled with the Holy Spirit and putting on the Lord Jesus Christ, rather than allowing sin and the devil to rule in one's body. He emphasizes the need for believers to have an enlightened and quickened conscience through the living word of God. Additionally, the preacher mentions the experience of being called a heretic for following Jesus wholeheartedly and the potential loss of friendships that may occur.

Transcript

I'd like to take three minutes to remind you of something that's in the Bible, show you a mirror, let you look into this looking glass. Here is the testimony of the Apostle Paul, but this I confess unto thee. Now, this is Acts 24, 14.

It's in the New Testament, Acts 24, 14. But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy. I've been called a heretic ever since I was a little boy, and I'm mighty glad to be in this company of those that are called heretics.

If you follow Jesus Christ with all your heart, you'll soon be a heretic. Your best friends won't like you anymore. They'll say, you can't do anything with him, he's too holy, or she's too holy.

You can't enter into a decent conversation with them. Some saintly woman said to me, whenever I say something, you always take the opposite view. Always talk against it.

Well, there's a reason for that. The way which they call heresy. So worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets, and have hope toward God, which

they themselves also allow.

Now, let me see, what is that hope? That there shall be a resurrection of the dead. Oh, both of the just and of the unjust. Strange, does anybody believe that? Tell me when you go through the cemeteries and you see all these tombstones.

I asked the Jewish woman, why do they put pebbles on the tombstones? Well, she said, when they rise from the dead, the devil will come and try to catch them, and then they have to have weapons to throw at the devil. That was a Jewish fable, of course. But there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust.

I'd rather believe what Jesus says. They shall come forth to everlasting damnation. Oh, good.

Did Paul teach that? Listen, he didn't only teach it, but he believed it. And that is the reason he says, and herein do I exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offense toward God and toward men. Now, we like exercise.

You're gaining weight, aren't you? You've got to exercise a little bit. Left, right, links, ranks. You've got to get rid of this blubber.

But here's an exercise that has a relation to something entirely different. Exercising thyself unto godliness, because we must all appear before a judgment seat of Christ to give an account for the things we have done in our bodies, whether good or bad, and that great judge has a record of every word we have spoken. Think of it.

We don't keep a record of that, do we? Oh, no. We're very careful to forget. Lots of people have a good conscience, they say, because they have a poor memory.

But here's a memory that's as keen as the noonday sun. And the apostle Paul, before he preached to others, he said, lest when I preach to others, I myself should be a castaway. Herein I exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offense toward God and toward man.

And you know, here's a friend of yours, your conscience. Every human being has a conscience. It's a great friend.

It's the spiritual pain. Doctors tell us that if there were no pain, in six months' time, there wouldn't be a living person left in the world. Pain is the danger signal, is the red light.

You're in danger. Your body is getting sick. Pain.

What is pain? You can't analyze it, but God in his great mercy has built the body with such a careful monitor, with a careful traffic agent that tells you when you're in danger of having a crack up. And what do men do? Oh, today, they deaden the pain, if possible. If somebody is hopelessly and helplessly ill, they deaden the pain so that they can die in comfort and in peace.

And that's what men do with their conscience. They do. The Bible talks about men whose conscience is seared with a hot iron.

Do you remember the time when you couldn't talk like you pleased? Do you remember the time when the Holy Ghost judged you, checked you? Don't say that. Now you did it. That word has gone forth.

You won't catch it again. It'll do its dirty work. It's poison.

There was a time when the Holy Ghost was very careful to enlighten your conscience. He had your conscience in his power. That's the only kind of a conscience the Apostle Paul is talking about.

A conscience void of offense toward God and toward man. And oh, what a blessing is a conscience. And as I said, every man has a conscience.

You go to our government books and you'll find they have conscience books. There are millions and millions of dollars sent into Washington from men who suddenly woke up and realized that they cheated the government out of some taxes, income taxes or something else. And they want to somehow get rid of that sting.

That sting comes from God Almighty. God Almighty is very faithful who will not suffer you to go to hell, but he will rather trouble your conscience so that you might wake up. And sometimes God uses a real whip.

When we are judged, when we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world. What a blessing is conscience. What a wonderful blessing it was to the Apostle Paul who said, I exercise myself all the time.

Every Christian, every honest Christian does that. He doesn't only live before man, but before God Almighty. How shall I do this great evil and sin against God? And that conscience is in the depth of your heart.

And it's quickened and enlightened by the word of God. Oh, this two-edged sword that pierces to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and joints and marrow and is a discernor of the thought and of the... Can you think what you please? Tell me, can you read what you please? Can you look at pictures as you please? Can you do as you please? Is that conscience seared with a hot iron? Oh, unto you there will come a day that'll burn like an oven. Jesus talks about it when he says, agree with that adversary quickly while you're in the way with him.

What is that adversary? Well, that's your conscience awakened by the spirit of God. He's your adversary. He says, you're in danger.

You're going to have a crack up if you don't get right. And that conscience keeps pounding. It would be interesting to know what the conscience does for gangsters even, for murderers.

They cannot forget. Police knows that. When a murder has been committed and they haven't been able to find the murderer, they put some spies around the scene of the murder.

That murder is bound to come back sometime to take a look. His conscience won't give him any rest. But not only murder.

Do you remember a time when God kept you so careful and you really exercised to keep a conscience void of offense toward God? Lord, thou has searched me. And no, what a blessing. What a blessing when God says, I am the almighty God.

This morning, a brother told us that he talked to some Catholic priests and he asked them whether they believed there was a God. And they said, well, nobody knows whether there's a God or not, but it's better to believe there is just in case. Beloved God said, I'm the almighty God.

Walk before me and be thou perfect. But the New Testament goes a step farther and says we walk in the light as he is in the light. And we have fellowship with the Father and with his son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

And that blood of Jesus Christ keeps cleansing us. It means it keeps us clean. Oh, that's what the blood of Jesus Christ does.

It keeps you clean. David doesn't only pray, wash me and I shall be whiter than snow. Create in me a clean heart.

Oh God, in sin did my mother conceive me. And I was born in iniquity. Oh God, what I need is a new heart.

I need a heart that's created by God almighty that is clean and whiter than the snow. Oh my God, my God. Then shall I teach transgressors thy way.

When my own heart is clean and David found out the way, he had been a mighty warrior. God had been with him. God had anointed him to be a king and he had lived a wonderful life.

But there was within his soul a poisonous root that he had not yet discovered. He had not yet really been cleansed. But when God allowed him to take a tumble, and God doesn't want you to fall into the mud to show you where you fail God.

He doesn't want to do that. That's why he awakens your conscience and he says, wait a minute boy. You're playing there with a dragon.

That little worm that you are now trifling with and thinking it's a cute little thing. That will grow to be a dragon. It'll swallow you up.

And with David, with poor David, he had gotten too busy with his wars and he had gotten too proud with his victories and God had to let him take a tumble. And oh what a tumble. But God in his great mercy picked him out of that mud hole.

How? He awakened his conscience. He awakened his heart. He said, when thy hand was heavy upon me, I groaned, I cried day and night.

He says, I made my bed to swim with my tears because thy hand was heavy upon me. Blessed is the man whose conscience is not sealed with a hot iron. Blessed is the man that can tremble at the word of God.

Oh how many times I've seen men and women tremble at the word of God. A few years later they don't tremble anymore. They don't.

Their hearts have been hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. Are they going to escape judgment? Tell me. Paul says, that's why I exercise myself to keep a conscience void of offense toward God and toward man because there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust.

And oh what a marvelous hope there is. Thank God. And what a marvelous blessing we have.

Not only a conscience that can be kept void of offense, but a great God that guards me against evil. And David, when he had discovered this poison in his soul, then he got right with God. Then he became a man after God's own heart because he repented so deeply.

He recognized. He said, my God, you desired truth in the inward part. In the hidden part shalt thou make me to know wisdom.

Do you know that's where sin is committed? It's in the depth of the soul where nobody can see it. No one. And you say, well, nobody knows it.

No one knows it. It's okay. And that thing is harbored there.

Beloved, that's where sin is committed. The sins that are open before the eyes of man, they're already broken sins. They're already judged.

But David prayed, wash me with hyssop. Do you know what that means with hyssop? Why they had to take hyssop and paint the doorposts with blood so that the angel of the Lord would not enter into their homes and kill the firstborn. And hyssop, blood of Jesus Christ, of the everlasting son of God has washed me, has been sprinkled.

I read that somewhere in the Bible today, and I don't remember where. Sprinkled with the blood of God. Sprinkled with the blood of Jesus Christ.

Can you picture that? Can you picture that blood that sprinkles you, that flows from the bleeding side of Jesus Christ, covering you from head to foot? Oh, that precious blood. Wash me and I shall be whiter than the snow. And he said, I confess my sin unto thee.

And then you forgave my sin and you washed me clean. But then he's not satisfied. Then he says, keep me as the apple of thine eye.

Oh, here is a keeping power that the apostle is talking about here. In this sin-cursed world, beloved, we need that carefulness, don't you? We need that mighty protecting power of the Holy Spirit. God knew that the natural man could never do it.

That's why he sent the Holy Ghost down from heaven. That's why he sent fire from heaven to devour all uncleanness. And that's why he makes this very body to be a temple of God, a possession of Jesus Christ.

What did Jesus do when he came to the temple? He cleaned it out. I like that scene where he takes a whip and he beats them over the bean. And he rolls those tables and all those money changers.

Can you imagine that scramble in the house of God? Can you imagine that redoubt, those folks that kicked because the children sang hosanna to the son of David? No, they were grumbling. No, they were yelling. Oh, where did you get the right from to come here and to drive us out of here? He said, break this temple and in three days I'll build it again.

Oh, that's the authority he had. He wasn't talking about this temple made of clay at all, but he's talking about this great temple. The devil says, look what I've done with man.

Look, go into the hell holes of the city, go into the moving pictures. No, you don't have to go down Myrtle Avenue. The devil says, look what I've done with man.

Man is that man. When you see children smoking cigarettes, missing links, devil says, listen, God almighty says, look what I did with man. Look at Jesus.

My only begotten son in whom I'm well-placed, they're going to be like him. You're going to be like him. That's the purpose that God had in coming down from heaven and clothing himself with human flesh that he might condemn sin in the flesh, that the righteousness demanded of the law might be fulfilled in us.

It took almighty God to come and to purchase for me that fire of eternity and to set me aflame with the fire of his holiness. Praise God. And to be holy as he is holy is the greatest call that can come to a human being.

If you were called to be a Kaiser or a king or a president of the United States or a millionaire someplace or to own all the diamonds, all the wealth in this world, it would be a curfew in comparison to this call to be like Jesus, not on the outside now, but on the inside, pure as a driven snow, pure as God himself, holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, made like unto Jesus Christ into all eternity. Oh, thank God. We beheld his glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

How beautiful are people that live a Christian life like Paul. How beautiful. They may not be beautiful on the outside at all, but oh, how beautiful is a life that's clean, a young man that's pure, that has backbone enough to say no to the devil, young woman that has enough of God in her life to say, do as you please, you geese.

They come around and they tempt you, don't they? Oh, yes. But to have a conscience void of offense toward God, oh Lord, thou hast searched me and known me. My God, why are you so curious? Thou knowest my down-sitting and mine uprising.

There is not a word in my tongue but lo, oh Lord, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before and laid thine hand upon me. Thou knowest my thoughts afar off.

If I took the wings of the morning and dwelt in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me and thy right hand shall hold me. Oh my God, and he's counted all the hairs on my head. What makes him so curious, beloved? God says, look what I did with man.

God is going to show to this world what he did with man. This victory has to be won here on earth in Brooklyn if you like. Men and women will walk in the streets of Brooklyn in the purity and power and might of the Son of God.

The Bible says that the salvation shall be revealed in the last time. It's ready to be revealed. God tells us that he has given us the baptism of the Holy Ghost, which is the earnest of our inheritance to the day of the redemption of God's purchased possession.

And when Jesus says, break this temple and in three days I'll build it, he showed us what authority he has to demand from me, a wholehearted surrender not only of my spirit and my soul but of my body as well. Oh, this call is tremendously wonderful, wonderful, wonderful. The girls all want to be like these Hollywood actresses.

Be surprised how many go to Hollywood expecting to get a get a place on the screen somehow. What is it, beloved? What's on the inside? God calls it a beast. You let sin reign in your body.

You let the devil rule in your body. But here's the great call of my Lord Jesus Christ. Alleluia.

Be ye filled with the spirit. Put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make not provision for the flesh. And here's where the conscience is enlightened and quickened by the living word of God.

And we can exercise ourselves to have a conscience void of offense. And that requires a deep inward attention to that indwelling of the Son of God. Grave not the Holy Spirit of God by whom you were sealed.

A young woman said to me years ago, she was blessed, she was saved, she was baptized with the Holy Ghost. She had a love affair that was not kosher. And when I talked to her and I kind of corrected her or tried to show her the way, she said, that's asking too much.

Today she's married to an unbeliever. She's backslidden. What will be the end? She'll have her way.

Yes, she's having her way. No, she is not having her way. She's having the devil's way.

He's got her chained with chains of darkness. What a choice when Jesus Christ calls men and women to present their bodies a living sacrifice because soon the trumpet will sound and the dead shall rise and we shall be changed in a moment in the twinkling of an eye. And already that changing is going on today.

Already we are made conscious of the power of his resurrection. That's what Pentecost stands for. It's the power of his resurrection that works mightily to subdue all things unto himself.

Agree with thine adversary quickly. What is he saying to you? Is he cutting you? Agree with him. Oh, get that thing under the precious blood and don't let it go at that.

People think they can just keep confessing their sins and okay, listen, that's the surest way to hell. If we confess our sins, he cleanses us from all unrighteousness. He makes us pure even as he is pure.

Oh, Lord God, we pray for our young people and I have this confidence that God is going to bring forth overcomers. Really, not because they wear a brown coat, but because they have a heart that is void of offense toward God and toward man.

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