

Having Certainty of Being Forgiven

by Tim Conway

This sermon emphasizes the importance of having a conscience cleansed by the blood of Christ to approach God with peace and assurance. It delves into Hebrews 9 and 10, highlighting the need to be free from an aversion to God, a consciousness of sin, and dead works. The focus is on how the blood of Christ purifies the conscience, leading to a liberated conscience that allows for love, sincere faith, and a pure heart.

Scripture: Hebrews 9:14, Hebrews 10:22, 1 Timothy 1:5, 1 John 1:7, Romans 8:1, 1 Peter 3:21

Topics: "Cleansed Conscience", "Assurance in Christ"

Description

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Transcript

The question is this, how do I know that the decision I've made really deals with my sin? I mean, how do I know when it's real? I'm talking about the choice that men and women make concerning Christ. How can I be sure that God regards that decision? How do I know that? How do I know if I've even decided to embrace the proper object of faith? You know, people believe all sorts of things, and they're pretty certain in their belief. We're going to be primarily in Hebrews chapter 9 and 10, so if you want to turn there.

Hebrews. I mean, when you think about, okay, where do you take sin? I kind of laid down the depravity of man in the first message. It might surprise you where I'm going to go.

Hebrews 9 and 10, why would you go there? What does that have to say about sin? Now, the first thing would be Hebrews 9 and verse 27. This is a very well-known verse. What the author of Hebrews is doing is, he's basically likening Christ being offered once, and then appearing the second time, not to deal with sin, but to save those who are eagerly waiting.

He compares that reality. He's using man, in verse 27, just as this happens with man, so you see verse 28, so Christ having been offered. I'm not so much interested in the comparison here, as much as the truth of verse 27.

Just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment. And I would just challenge you here, just to replace man with me, and say it to yourself, me. Just as it is appointed for me to die once, and after that comes my judgment.

I have an appointment with death. It's appointed. Just like Randy Pizzino had an appointment, and Paul Brown had an appointment, there's an appointment.

You have an appointment with death, and then your judgment. Folks, you just ponder that. You lay in bed tonight.

I'm going to die. There's an appointment. What's that like? What's that like? You think about that.

We think about death. We're getting older all the time. The older you get, the more it stares at you.

I mean, Papa, it's going to take you. Probably in the next five to ten years, people don't live to be in their hundreds very often. Randy didn't see it coming.

Bang! Stroke. Paul didn't see it coming. Bang! There's a truck.

It comes when we don't expect it, but it's appointed. There is a date, a time, an hour with your name on it. You have an appointment.

And what's going to happen right at that moment? I mean, brethren, because these things are true, that is what makes it a reality that sin is no light matter. Not at all. And you just think, what happens at that moment? We're hearing these glorious pictures of chapter 4 and chapter 5 of Revelation.

But do you recognize? I mean, you think about this. I have to stand face to face with the glory of God and with the holiness of God and with the righteousness and the justice of God. Face to face.

The greatness of this God, I am going to be there. Folks, you recognize what the great reason is that so many want to be atheists. It's behind this.

You want to explain this away. That's the great motive. And the thing about that day is that is where sin, your sin, that's where it's going to come to a culmination.

That's the climax. That's where it all comes to a head. And the thing about that moment is there's going to be no looseness.

No vagueness. Do you know what the Scripture tells us there's going to be exactness? Exact. Exactness would be really tolerable if I had no sin.

Matthew 12 People will give account for every careless word. Does that make anybody uncomfortable? Ever? You think Jesus meant to make us uncomfortable by saying such things? Every careless word? Wow. Ecclesiastes 12.14 God will bring every deed, every deed into judgment.

Every secret thing. I mean, careless words concern us. That's not even secret.

Every secret thing. Luke 12 Jesus says nothing is covered that will not be revealed. Matthew 13.41 Jesus talks about all causes of sin.

They're going to be discovered. They're going to be dealt with. And the thing, Paul says this, we must all... He's talking to Christians.

A Christian doesn't get out of this. We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ. And he says it, knowing therefore the terror of the Lord.

Paul recognized, even talking to Corinthian Christians, we must all... Nobody's missing. No American is missing. The Vikings aren't missing.

The Babylonians, they're there. The Egyptians. Pilate's there.

The Nazis are there. Everybody that's bowed down to Allah, they're there. The Japanese are there.

The English are there. Nicaraguans are there. Nigerians are there.

But do you know the thing about it all? As we imagine it, it's almost like hearing those two chapters. You know, when you hear Revelation 4 and 5, you picture it as a spectator. We all do that.

We get an image in our mind, because that's how it is when we're reading those two chapters, even there where you were seated in your apartment. You were a spectator looking at this imagery. Judgment Day is no spectator sport.

The thing about it is, though all those others are there, the thing is you're there. I'm there. And why? Because we all must appear.

The certainty of it. The reality of it. I mean, this thing is inescapable.

There's no getting around it. And Paul says there's terrors associated with it. And you imagine, right there in Revelation, it talks about the wail of the nations when Jesus appears.

And our brother last week, he was talking about the fact that there is a great harvest. And oh brethren, there is a great harvest. But you know, just imagine a thing like Jesus said about what our brother brought in the first hour.

A tower of Siloam fell on 18 people and killed them. And it says there, unless you repent, you will likewise perish. Isn't that amazing? He says, in effect, those 18, they all perished.

And you will too if you don't repent. You take a random culture of Jewish people in Jesus' day, and just a random 18 have a tower fall on them, and Jesus said they all perished. I mean, there are terrors associated with that day.

And I would just say, in light of that reality, that should impact every single one of us. I mean, does this not demand your attention and my attention? This should govern our lives. We should be really concerned about this.

Here's the thing, brethren, I said at the end of my message last time, Christianity is built on facts. And here's the facts. You have sinned.

You are going to die. And you are going to be judged. That's serious stuff.

And you know what? You can't just... I remember reading about, was it Bunyan? When he was under conviction, he would look at the cattle, and he just wanted to trade places with them. Just to be a dumb cow. Because they don't have sin.

And he was feeling convicted, and he just wanted to escape that. But you see, we can't just opt out. We can't just go back to a state of non-existence.

You can't stand still. We're being drawn towards that moment. And it should be something to think about.

Seriously about. We must all appear. And you know, if you look at the word appear that Paul uses, it's not just like a movie star makes an appearance on the stage.

That word appear has the idea of exposed. It is total exposure. Total.

No disguise. No disguise. The works that are done on the earth, 2 Peter says, will be exposed.

Ecclesiastes 12. Every secret thing, good or evil. Luke 12.

Nothing is covered up. 1 Corinthians 4-5. The Lord will bring to light the things now hidden, and will disclose the purposes of your heart.

Every secret thing, every thought, all our purposes, it's going to be brought out. Total nakedness. Exposure.

Exposed as we really are. In that hour, there's no costumes, no masks, no masquerading, no hypocrisy. And the eyes of the One who sits upon that throne, before those eyes, nothing is hidden.

They're not hidden now. But see, in that day it will be sight. We believe it by faith right now, but you don't see Him looking at you.

Oh, sometimes you feel it. Sometimes the Spirit so moves in the heart that you can feel those eyes upon you. Exposed.

Listen, these are the facts of Christianity. It's based on facts. Sin is a fact, and judgment day is a fact, and you being there.

Me being there. I was laying in my bed last night just thinking, I'm going to be there. My turn is going to come.

We can't hardly imagine it. And here's another fact. This one gives us a sigh of relief, right? It's this fact.

Jesus said, Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life, he does not come into judgment. Anybody like those words? He does not come into judgment. Most of you sitting here have an idea about that fact.

It comes out of John 5. Now listen, we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ. But when we do, there are some who will not come under judgment. That's what Scripture says.

Doesn't Scripture speak of the blessed man to whom God does not impute sin? And so, I want that! That should be the total bent of our souls to be certain I have that. Don't neglect. Don't ignore.

Don't procrastinate. Don't think you'll repent tomorrow. Don't think, oh, this is just religious stuff.

Come visit this church and, oh, they just talk religious stuff. This is reality. I'm talking facts.

God has given us a book and He's told us what the reality is. We are moving towards death. The cemetery proclaims that.

You can't escape that reality. And God says, that which you know and can see with your eyes and you've sat in funerals before, you know this, that after that comes judgment, your judgment. And every one of us knows, every one of us knows that the things we've done, especially the things we've done in secret, and I'm talking in the mind, where no one else can see, you know what you've thought.

You know. We have to give account for every single idle word, but here is this reality. How do I get this? There's a possibility of somebody coming to the judgment and yet not coming under judgment.

They're going to stand there. In that day, all of us must appear, but no judgment. They say, where do I look? And you know what I find? I find that this book, I told you last time, this book is basically taken up with the hour of sin.

It's taken up with the age of sin. You go two chapters in, you get sin. You get to where there's two chapters left, and everything between there, from Genesis 3 all the way through to Revelation 21, is the age of sin.

And it's like after God is done dealing with that, and He gives us a book, He says, you know something? The Spirit has something to say to you. To you people who are in sin, and you people who are moving towards death and judgment, the Spirit says, come. And the bride says, come.

The church. And it says that, let everyone who hears say, come. Have you heard? Do you hear? Anybody hear those words? Let those who hear say, come.

Have you heard? Do you hear? Say it then! Come! We should all be saying it. Come! Come! Let the one who is thirsty, come! Whosoever will, let him come and take the water of life. And there's no mystery about where that is.

Jesus says in John 7, He says, if you're thirsty, come to Me. And that's it. This is what I want you to grab from that.

Come. It is an imperative, and it's in the middle voice. What does that mean? The middle voice verb means that the performer of the action, and what's the action? What's the action? Come.

When it's in the middle voice, the performer of the verb, the performer of the action of the verb actually acts upon Himself. Come. You must act on yourself.

You know when the Scripture says repent? That's an imperative to you. You need to change your mind. You need to face the facts.

That's what John did. You know, John tells us that. That he and those other guys right there in the beginning of 1 John, we touched Him.

You know what? We sorted this thing out. We looked at Him. We heard Him.

We evaluated this. We weighed it out. And Scripture would tell you to do the same thing.

Evaluate the facts. Face it. Look at it.

Reason with yourself. Your answer is required here. That's the idea behind.

What do you say? You remember how Jesus spoke to those 12 guys? You remember what He said there in John 6 right at the end? What did He say to them? Do you guys want to go too? Remember how everybody was leaving? And He said, do you guys want to go too? You see, there's always a decision to make. When it comes to the treasure that's buried in the field, there's always a decision to make. Is it really all that valuable? Well, you better reason with yourself.

Jesus says, come. Come. And you know where you come.

You don't come physically with your feet. But your answer is required in this. This is a middle voice.

You need to act upon yourself to come. You have an obligation to come. You are being told to come.

The bride tells you come. The Spirit tells you come. And if you've got ears to hear, whoever has ears to hear should be telling others and telling themselves, come! We better go.

We better get there. You have a choice. You guys recognize that election doesn't eliminate choosing? Oh, beware of your Calvinism.

Beware. It twists and distorts the Gospel so easily and the devil is right there to try to persuade you of it. Listen, the doctrines of grace, what we call Calvinism, this Bible doesn't support that.

And I'm not saying that those things aren't true. Just be careful about what you emphasize and to what degree you emphasize it and what error it routes you into. Election never does away with the fact that there are decisions to be made.

I set before you life and death. Choose life. Isn't that how Scripture speaks? Who are you going to serve? The gods your father served on the other side of the river? That's for me and my house.

We're going to serve the Lord. You see, there's choices to be made here. What was it Elijah said up there on Mount Carmel? If Baal be God, serve Him.

God be God, then you serve Him. This is the choice of the ages. But now, brethren, okay, that's introduction.

Here's the question. Yes, we're going to get back to Hebrews 9 and 10. The question is this, how do I know that the decision I've made really deals with my sin? I mean, how do I know when it's real? I'm talking about the choice that men and women make concerning Christ.

How can I be sure that God regards that decision? How do I know that? How do I know if I've even decided to embrace the proper object of faith? You know, people believe all sorts of things, and they're pretty certain in their belief. Somebody can really believe, well, I've made the decision, and their trust is in the decision. Somebody can say I've repented, and their trust is in their repentance.

How do I know when it's really in the right place? Isn't that the question? You know, I can decide to study the doctrines of grace. I can study election. I can study justification.

I can study the atonement. I mean, I can decide to read the Bible. I can decide to come to church.

But what I need, brethren, every one of you sitting here, and we're all in different places, what we really need is a confirmation that my sins have actually been dealt with. It's one thing to be religious. It's a whole other thing to be in a position where you know that your decision is more than just an empty thing of the flesh that God has no regard for.

Don't you want to know? I mean, I've chosen Christ. But how do you know? We're moving towards death and towards judgment. You just don't want to... This can't be.

Well, I hope so. Some wishful thinking. Who wants to do that with their soul? We don't want to do that.

And the thing is, where's the Bible verse that tells me Tim Conway is saved or Tim Conway is elect? Well, it's not there. The Bible doesn't tell me. And no man can tell me.

Oh, you get people, you know, they really try to encourage you. Everything is okay. And there's lots of churches that are... Oh, they're trying to persuade everybody that it's okay with them.

All you have to do is... You have faith. It doesn't matter what else anybody says. You're in there.

I used to go to church like that. That's the message. No man can tell you that.

How do I know? How do I know my sins are forgiven? I can say, listen, I know Jesus Christ came to seek and save sinners. I can know He's the way. That's what Scripture tells me.

I know there's no way to the Father except through Him. I know those things. I know Jesus died on the cross.

I know He came to save His people from their sin. I've read those things. I've been reading the Bible.

But how can I know it's true for me? I don't want to just get there. Can you imagine? And you know, people are so confident when it seems like death is way off. But oh, let it start getting close.

Let death stare them in the face. You know where you don't want to be? You know where I don't want to be? Is all of a sudden here's death staring me in the face and I'm recognizing. We had one who attended this church for a long time and we called her sister.

And you know what? She was living behind the scenes in sexual sin and different things and now she's got terminal cancer. And her mom calls me and says, come over here and tell her that it's okay with her soul. And I went there and I did not tell her it was okay with her soul.

In fact, I assumed it was not. But she still had life and breath. And she needed to use every bit of it to cry unto the Lord going out of this life.

And I'd leave and she'd go to watch TV. And she died. And you know, she called me one time.

I was up in Missouri and she called me. And she said, I can hear the demons. I can hear footsteps.

She said she knew it was not alright with her soul. You know, that's not the place you want to be. Here's death staring you followed by judgment and you've played the religious part.

You're even a Calvinist. And in the end, it's not okay. It is not well with your soul.

How do we know? Okay, I want to talk about sin and conscience. Now, don't despise me before you hear me. Hear me out.

Judgment Day is coming. You've sinned. How can you be certain that you are prepared to meet thy God? The author of Hebrews has some things to say here.

And I think they're extremely helpful. So, let's dive in. First, Hebrews 9. Look at v. 1. I'm just going to go through this really quick.

But the first covenant, v. 1, the first covenant had regulations for worship. Earthly place of holiness. 2. There was this tent, lampstand, table, bread, holy place.

3. There was a curtain. Behind that curtain, the most holy place. 4. Altar of incense.

Ark of the Covenant. 5. There's cherubim, mercy seat. 6. There's priests performing their ritual duties.

7. High priest once a year taking blood. 8. By this the Holy Spirit... See, this is all symbolic. And by this the Holy Spirit indicates the way into the holy places was not yet open.

That was the veil and everything. It shouted, stand back. V. 9 says it was symbolic.

The gifts and sacrifices offered that cannot... Notice this. Perfect the conscience of the worshiper. Now, right there.

You see, the conscience is no small matter. I want to talk to you about conscience and sin. What does this mean? Cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper.

Okay, now go to chapter 10, verse 1. We get more help here. Since the law has but a shadow... Yeah, that's what was said back in 9. 9 was symbolic. Here, again, it's a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of those realities.

Can never by the same sacrifices that are constantly offered every year make perfect those who draw near. Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered since the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any... And here's our word conscience again. Now, the ESV says consciousness.

If you've got the King James, it says conscience. It's our word again. Now get that.

They would have no longer had any consciousness of sin. If any sacrifice had truly cleansed anyone's sins, you see what he's saying? Sin would no longer be brought to mind. No longer any consciousness.

Now that's a strong statement. I recognize it. We'll come back to that thought in a second.

But it's enough to recognize that that old covenant system did not help the conscience. In fact, you have a very depressing picture in 10.11. Every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. And the whole time, there is that veil that we read about there in chapter 9. A veil.

A curtain. It hung there in front of the mercy seat. And you know, it was a barrier.

There's a barrier between you and God. And all those sacrifices and all those offerings and everything, you know what they did? They brought to remembrance sin. In fact, what they did was they assaulted the conscience with it is not well with you.

It is not well with you. And there is a veil. And there are these sacrifices that keep being made.

And the very guarantee that none of them ever actually did anything was the fact that they kept having to be offered over and over and over and over. And yet, no sin is being dealt with. Nothing is happening.

Conscience. Now listen, what am I talking about here? Conscience is that inner voice. Strong witness that God has designed into each one of us.

It's that God-given faculty that bears witness of the rightness of something. When we do right, we get peaceful, nice feelings. There's a feeling of confirmation.

When we do something wrong, there's a foreboding. There's condemnation. It speaks to us.

And brethren, this voice is so real that God can judge you on judgment day just based on that voice. Even if you don't have the Word of God or the commandments of God. Did you know that? It's that inner voice that excuses you or accuses you.

And it's so real, so God-given, so much a part of the fabric of humankind that you can be judged on judgment day just on the light of conscience. That's what we're talking about. Conscience.

And the author of Hebrews says that the whole old covenant system it reminded men of their sin and never produced a perfecting of the conscience. So you see what a perfecting of the conscience is. You get some idea about it.

All that system did was just prompted uneasiness and disquiet and guilt. But, Hebrews 9, 11, But, when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent, not made with hands, not of this creation, He entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of blood of goats and calves, but by means of His own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls and the sprinkling of defiled persons with ashes of a heifer sanctified for the purification of the flesh, and by the way, that's what all that stuff did.

It purified. There was that whole standard of cleanness and uncleanness and it did purify according to the flesh. Or purification of the flesh.

How much more with the blood of Christ who through the eternal Son offered Himself without blemish to God purify our conscience. So you've got this idea of a perfect conscience. You've got this idea in Hebrews 10, 2 of the conscience no longer having a consciousness of sins.

Here the idea of purifying the conscience from dead works to serve the living God. So here's the question of the hour. Though Christ came to give forgiveness of sins, how can I know that I have that forgiveness? Judgment's approaching.

Listen, only God can assure us and persuade us. We need supernatural Christianity. We need God to invade.

We need God to come. This is divine. This is supernatural.

And God interacting with your conscience is very real. It is biblical. It is certain.

We don't want to get away from that. Only God can do this. He can persuade me that my sins are gone.

And what does He do? He does it by removing this sense of guilt and condemnation from the conscience. Brethren, I want more than wishful thinking with this death and judgment that's approaching. How do I know if my faith is actually fixated on the right thing? People trust all sorts of things.

People trust all sorts of religious things that they do. And we've got people here that are doing exactly that thing. And I'm hoping maybe something here can find us out.

As Jonathan said, there are two groups. And you know what? There's the group that God has spoken to the conscience and brought rest. And there's a group here that still has what later in chapter 10 is called an evil conscience.

We have people here with evil consciences. So here it is. If I would... Listen, we never want to downplay assurance.

Sometimes people say, well, you know, I'm saved by faith, so assurance doesn't really matter. The Bible never says that. The book of Hebrews especially never says that.

What has to happen to you to live the Christian life full of joy and confidence and boldness and peace and comfort? How? How? How's that ever going to happen? Just knowing the doctrines of grace? Does that do it? Does that do it for anybody? Did any of you learn about election? Oh, that brought such peace to you. You know what I find? A lot of times when people find out about election, it does just the opposite. Oh no, I'm not one of the elect.

It's almost like that's just default. That's where people go. Brethren, that won't suffice.

I don't need to just know that Jesus Christ died for sinners or that He's going to save His people from their sin. I need to know that Jesus Christ died for me. I need it affirmed to me.

I need my conscience to speak it. I need to know because God has communicated it to me. Brethren, this is nothing artificial.

I need to know Christ died for me. And only God can persuade me that my sins are gone. It's against Him that I've sinned, and it's only Him that can persuade me of such things.

And according to Hebrews 9.14, if I'm a true Christian and my sins have truly been removed, I've got to experience something in my conscience. That's what 9.14 says. There's a purification of the conscience.

The test, the gauge that my decision for Christ is authentic is going to be backed up by a liberated conscience. By a saved conscience. And what I find in these verses is that our conscience, God comes in.

This is a test. This is a gauge. God comes in and He cleanses the conscience from three things.

And I'm going to work backwards through them. The first one, notice, Acts 10.22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith. Notice this.

With our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience. And you know what happened? Adam sinned, and what did he do? He ran from God's presence. You're not trying to fix the leaf and dive into the woods.

Why? Here comes God. They hear Him coming in the cool of the day. Diving into that forest.

What was he trying to do? Trying to silence the awful thing that happened in his conscience. That awful reality that resonated in him of an offended Creator. That had just created him.

Who knows what happened short before that? He's offended Him, and He's aware of it. And He's got to get away. He's got to go hide.

He's got to get out of His presence. Brethren, there's no doubt about this. You see the author saying, Drawing near.

Drawing near. If there is something that the conscience has to be cleansed of, It's that hesitation. It's that aversion to God.

It's that dread that man experiences. That foreboding. And I know there are some evil consciences in this place.

Listen, what keeps us away from God? And I'm talking the true God of Scripture. Oh, we love to knit the fabric of our artificial God. Who our conscience can kind of be comfortable around.

But I'm talking about the God of Scripture. Idols that we won't let go of. Some men, I know it, I've pastored long enough.

Some of you, you're still watching pornography. We have people that, you know what? You're addicted to work, stuff, money, video games. And you know what? There's going to be a hesitation in your soul.

How? How can I go to God when I feel so dirty? You see, that's what the conscience will say to you. We're humans. We're designed by God with consciences.

That witness to this very reality. To the sinful things that we do. Sinful testimonies of real guilt that our conscience is telling us.

You're guilty, you're guilty, you're guilty. It's like you study the Scriptures and you hear all about Revelation 4 and 5. You hear about this coming judgment day when I've got to stand in the full blaze and glory of this holy God. And you start thinking about how holy He is.

And people falling down in their sin. Depart from me. I'm a sinful man.

I dwell amongst a people of unclean lips. This is how men are responding. It's like Manoah sees, we're going to die.

You're in front of the God who says, you can't see my glory. You're going to die, Moses. And we're going to go stand before Him.

And you've been toying with sin and toying with stuff and behind the scenes. I'll tell you, you hear preaching, you come to church and you try to make up for it. And you're hoping to put that voice to sleep.

You're thinking religion is going to silence that inner voice. What keeps us from God is real sin echoing in an evil, condemning conscience. That's what keeps us back.

Very hard to have any kind of profitable prayer life when your conscience is screaming. You know what you have to have? Your conscience washed from this aversion to where what you hear God speaking to the conscience is to have God come. You know what the devil told Adam right there in the beginning? Well, God really doesn't have your good in mind.

God's really against you. He wants to keep you down. He knows all you could be if you hate of this fruit.

What we need is God to come and speak love to us and speak peace to us and tell us, I am good. Oh, I'm holy and I'm fearful. But you know, I saved the chief of sinners.

I'm gracious. I'm merciful. We need God to speak that.

You come across the text like just how the tax collectors and the sinners were readily coming to Jesus there in Luke 15. And God speaks to us and cleanses that conscience and says, I'm approachable. I mean, think about this book, Boldly Approach the Throne of Grace.

How are you ever going to just run into the presence of God and boldly approach when you've got a defiled conscience that still feels the veil is there saying, stay back, stay back, stay back. And your sin, it's real sin. And your conscience is dealing with you about real sin in your life.

It sees you're controlled by it. It sees what's happening behind the scenes when nobody else is watching. It hears all your words.

It's not surprising that people feel a hesitation. Oh, it's one thing to come to church. There's a whole other thing to take your heart and soul into the very presence of God.

So that's what we need. We need God to speak and cleanse. God touches the conscience with boldness.

And only one thing can sprinkle. You recognize where the eyes have to turn. There is one place where God is going to powerfully speak to your conscience through.

And what is it? Well, you saw it there. It's in 9.14. It's the precious blood. You see, that's where my faith has to be fixed.

And that is the means through which God is going to speak peace and that I can approach. And you see, that's what all those sacrifices were only symbolic of. But they pointed to a sacrifice, folks, that was only offered for once and it didn't have to be offered anymore! Ever again! Once was enough! Because it really did wash away sin.

But here's the second thing. There's the aversion to God. Our consciences have to be cleansed from that hesitation.

And that's from 10.22 that we just looked at. Drawn near with a true heart. Sprinkled clean from an evil conscience.

But here's the second thing. And this comes, again, I'm working backwards. Hebrews 10.2 The worshippers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sin.

But you see what he's saying. He's saying, if there really was an offering that was only offered once and it really did cleanse sin, then there would no longer be any consciousness of sins. You know what? By

nature, man feels guilty and sinful.

And his conscience tells him so. And you know why? Because he is! He is that! Conscience isn't making that up. The moment Adam sinned, he felt guilty.

Why? He felt condemned. Why? Because he was! That was the reality. Conscious of his sins, man is afraid.

Oh, did you see it? Jonathan was talking about COVID. I hate to even talk about COVID. I couldn't believe it.

I went to the bank yesterday. I can't believe here in America, COVID is still in the news! ABC News. Yesterday morning.

It's like, seriously? Are they still talking about that here? Can't we let that... You know what was amazing to me? And I saw this from the vantage point. Yes, a little bit here, but primarily I was exposed to it over in the UK. The number of professing Christians scared to death.

Why such a fear of death? I mean, I'm thinking, are you saved? Why is there such a fear of death? Well, you know why? Because there's such a consciousness of sin. I mean, conscious of his sins, what happens? Man is conscious of sin. He's conscious of the fact that his sin deserves punishment.

And so what is man constantly trying to do? He's constantly trying to outrun sin. Outrun it. And you know what he does? He wants to try to convince himself he's really not as sinful as he thinks he is.

And so just like Adam, you know, Adam's trying to hide, but then Adam's also blame shifting. Well, we want to hide from God. We want to blame shift.

We want to try to escape death. But what happens is, the cleansed worshiper no longer has a consciousness of sin. Isn't that an amazing statement? You say, how can that even be? Is that really even true of any of us here? But you know what the author of Hebrews expects? That every true Christian here is going to get to a place where the conscience has no longer any consciousness of sins.

When the eye of faith is fixed steadfastly on Christ and His shed blood and nothing else, and perceives that God has provided all of this to nail my sins to the cross, not in part, the absolute whole of it, what happens? My conscience comes alive with freedom. Because brethren, the perfect conscience, the conscience that no longer has a consciousness of sins, it's not as though the conscience doesn't recognize my remaining sin. It's not as though my conscience doesn't recognize that it is indeed sin and that it is indeed evil.

What it's saying, no consciousness of sin is no consciousness of any sin that God's going to hold against me. There's no accusation that can be brought against me. My record is clear.

My conscience is now free. But very quickly, Hebrews 9.14, here's the third thing. Our conscience needs to be cleansed from this awkwardness in approaching God.

It needs to be cleansed from a consciousness of sins. And 9.14, how much more will the blood of Christ who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God purify our conscience from... What's the third thing? Do you see it there? What is it? Dead works. That's the third thing.

What are dead works? Dead works are the things that men do, that men work at and strive at that are dead, that never bring life. The most religious, the most moral things that men are striving to do that never touch his sin. And that was the problem under the Old Covenant.

With all of their doing in their rituals, in their observances, in everything that they were doing, it never touched their sin. That's what it said. Those priests kept moving, moving, moving, moving.

They were standing. They never sat down. Do you know how this book starts? He sat down at the right hand of majesty.

Now we have to make purification for sins. Folks, we have a priest that's sitting. Those priests never sat because it said something.

The conscience could never be dealt with by this. It's just, man tries to do all sorts of things. What's he trying to do? He wants to bring peace.

Some of you are sitting there right now and you don't have peace in your conscience. Why? Too much sin. Too much stuff.

Too much stuff hanging on your life. And you're trying to do this moral thing. You're trying to come.

I don't know if you come here because it's maybe more social activity or you're trying to do your religious thing, but you're seeking this peace. You want to silence the conscience. But it does no good.

The guilt always returns and that's why it's like a crack of the whip. It's like, you know what? Coming to church is a good thing. When it flows out of my confidence is totally in the blood of Christ.

Reading Scripture is a good thing. But you know what? Some here, you have an evil conscience. And so when you read this book, it's more like I have to.

I've got to do that to put the notch on my belt, otherwise God's going to be mad at me. I've got to go do the evangelism. I've got to go do the thing.

I've got to show up at church because if I don't, then God's going to let me have it. God's going to get me. You see, two people can be doing the exact same things.

And one has a liberated conscience and one has an evil conscience. And from the outward, it looks like they're doing the same thing. I look at all of you, it looks like you're all doing the same thing.

But I know that inside, you've got two kinds of consciences here. Man's trying to do all sorts of things to just silence this. Constantly returns to doing it.

Because he does, he can't stop what the dead works. Conscience cracks the whip. It keeps going.

You see, what has to happen is the conscience has to be purged of these dead works. You know why? Because every one of them is a false object of hope. That's what every one of them is.

It's amazing to me. Now listen, hear me. I'm not trying to accuse you.

I'm trying to help you. I will sit and listen to somebody and they want to tell me all about their repentance. And they don't mention Christ, His blood, His death.

The forgiveness is had through Him. I repented. I repented.

I'm striving to repent. I'm trying to repent. You know what? That's likely you have an evil conscience and you are striving to clean up your life.

And you're calling that repentance because you're doing things and you're chopping things out of your life. And it's just like this whip is cracked over your shoulder and you feel like you have to do it, you have to do it, you have to do it. But you're not at peace.

There is no joy. The conscience has to be purged of these things because those things only instill bondage and fear. Always.

For the Jew, it was ceremonial laws. They felt like they needed to keep this. They needed to uphold this law.

But you know what? We have our own brands of legalism right in this place where you feel like I've got to do, I've got to do, I've got to do this, I've got to do this. You sing the songs. You can talk the talk.

But listen, one thing, no matter how we look on the outside, you can't get away from your conscience. And the conscience, what does the conscience say? I'm talking about all the things that people do and yet they never have a sense of themselves justified. Oh, when God speaks to the conscience and says, you are forgiven.

Not in part, but the whole. It is nailed to the cross through the shed blood of My Son. And it's like freedom.

I am free. I am free. That puts a song in the conscience, a shout in the conscience.

Men's counsel idolatrously. See, I'm talking about decision. A decision's required of you.

But you know what that decision needs to flow out of? The fact that you actually looked at the blood of Jesus Christ and you remember Jonathan's message and you find that more precious than anything else and I've got to have that more, because that's where my hope is. It's not my decision to go after it. I can be looking at myself making the decision or my eyes can be set on what I'm making a decision for.

Listen, this is life and death. One is a dead work. One is living.

When my eyes are on Christ, what's my faith on? Is my faith on? Am I really trusting? When I evaluate my whole life, where's my trust? Where's my confidence? And you see what's happening here. Some of you listening, you know what I'm saying in all of this. Everything's been done by you.

Nothing by God. Blood's not been applied. Your conscience hasn't met the blood yet.

You're just doing all these things. You're trying to make up for the wrong. Trying to silence that inner voice.

Brethren, the problem with dead works is they are devoid of the power of God. They always are. But when man has been shut up to just faith, I can't decide right.

I can't repent right. Even in my faith, I find myself praying, Lord, I believe, help my unbelief. Lord, I repent, but half the time my repentance is, yeah, I change my mind.

But how often do I change my mind back to some perverse thing? It's like, in the end, it's got to come from beyond me. Because my best efforts are tainted. It's got to come back to this.

I've got to be shut up to this one thing. And I find that the life is in the blood. My life is in the blood.

My life is in His blood. What is His blood? I mean, it's not some physical thing. It's the reality that He shed it there and what was accomplished in His death.

We've picked that cup up. Why? Because we're remembering that death. Why do we come back to that all the time? Well, there's this reason.

Listen, our brother was telling us a couple of weeks back that the Gospel is for the saints. This is why it's so important what Jeff said. Why? Saints are not put off or offended or bored by hearing the same Gospel proclaimed afresh.

Why? Conscience. I mean, think, man. Think, woman.

Listen, the opposite of this is true. That they would have ceased to be offered all these offerings and sacrifices if they really did anything. Why? Since the worshipers having once been cleansed would no longer have any consciousness of sins.

And the opposite of that is true. Where there is an offering that doesn't have to be offered anymore, where the sacrifice indeed has ceased to be offered, therefore, there should be no consciousness of sin. Can that be? Yes.

Why? Because my sins are obliterated from the record. Because I'm counted absolutely sinless in the court of Heaven. That's the reality.

Every sin has been abolished to where there's no more remembrance of it. And if it's true those sins don't bear on my conscience anymore, I'm no longer condemned. I mean, God has come in and He spoke in peace.

Folks, you know what happens? You get your eyes off the blood. This is one of the reasons why we want to do the Lord's Supper every week. Because the early church did it.

I believe there's a really important reason why they did it. One of the reasons you don't want to scoff at the Gospel being re-preached as Christians is because of what? Because, brethren, we are surrounded in this world by lies. If I see anything in the book of Revelation, it is there in chapter 12, where there's a dragon.

And you know what's coming out of his mouth? A flood that means to wash away the people of God. That flood. What comes out of the mouth of the devil? What comes out of the mouth of that dragon is lies.

And we are surrounded by it. We're in a world of lies. And we're assaulted.

And there's constant attacks. And the devil is constantly there whispering. The blood's not enough.

Don't you know there's rewards at the end? Don't you know Paul Brown outran you? You've got to do, do, do, do, do. He comes in. He likes to thunder works back in our ears.

He likes to tell us different things. He's constantly there. Brethren, you've got to come back to this.

And what happens when you see the blood? I don't feel guilty. I can shout. I can sing.

Why? Because it's all under the blood. And I feel it and it's being communicated. And what happens then? I'm not full of all this gloominess and condemnation that the eye of the conscience is now redirected.

It doesn't focus on my sins and on my guilt and on my inward pollution. Where? When I'm under the blood and my conscience is free and it's all liberated, then where's my heart going? Oh, it's going to the glories in Revelation 4 and 5. And I'm thinking of Christ high and lifted up. And I'm thinking of all of His perfections and His blood and His glories and the unsearchable riches of Christ and all of it.

The deliverance by that blood and the wonders of His righteousness of Christ sitting on that throne. And there He is. And He's the one who is worthy, worthy, worthy.

And He can open the scroll. And I'm thinking of all those things and I'm lifted up and I'm carried away. And yes, my conscience is well aware that I still sin.

But my conscience is well aware that there's a courtroom of God and because of the blood, none of these things can be laid to my account anymore. They're not accusing me anymore. And so I'm free.

And listen, I'm making an appeal to you because if you're here and your conscience is still evil and you know it. Yes, you've been religious. Yes, you've played the game.

But you just know you've got this nagging feeling. Who wants to approach death and judgment with a nagging feeling? Or you keep falling back into your sin enough where it's just you know. You know something is wrong.

You know it. Brethren, what you have to remember is this. It's the blood that God applies to the conscience.

And when we lose sight of that blood and this world with all the lies and all the deception and all the stuff and all the worldliness, you know what can happen. Our peace and our joy can be replaced by guilt and gloom and doubt. And then what happens? Bad things happen.

We become cold and carnal and worldly and spiritually insensitive. Brethren, all it takes is a fresh view of the fountain that's filled with blood. And brethren, what we want in all those fresh views is we need the supernatural again.

We need this. We need God actually speaking peace. I was reading yesterday I believe from the Psalm and it says this.

Say to my soul, I am your salvation. Oh, that's what we want for the conscience. An inward persuasion of the security in God.

I mean, that's the most precious thing. I don't care what furnace of fire you might be faced with. One word from the Lord speaking peace.

I am your salvation. Oh, the conscience is just set to singing. Free! Therefore, I mean, brethren, when your thoughts are fixed on the blood, even though, yes, you have remaining sin, I have remaining sin, but my conscience can be at rest.

I mean, the blood of Christ so thoroughly covers all my sin, so thoroughly removes all my guilt, that my conscience can just smile at all of it and say, nevertheless, not because I'm sinless, not because my conscience doesn't know that when I sin it really is sin, but because my conscience is informed. Constantly being re-informed when we lift that cup up. There is total salvation in that blood.

Perfect. And so, you know what the whole thrust of Hebrews is all about? It's drawing near to God. Because all this is true, let us draw near.

I mean, isn't that not the very heart of the Gospel? The fact that the Gospel is meant to break the barriers down to where I can come close to God, I can get near. There's no charges leveled against me in the court of God. God refuses to hear any charge or admit any accusation against the Christian.

Somebody who confidently is resting in the blood. I mean, brethren, it almost seems too good to be true. But that's the good news.

We've sinned. God knows it. But He refuses to lay it to our account.

Why? For the sake of that blood that we shed. And since it's never laid to my account, what happens? My conscience is not under condemnation. And by the way, folks, I mean, what the author is saying is, with this conscience, we never... You never want to settle for any kind of Christianity that leaves us at a distance from God.

If there's any truth in Scripture, it is we have access. Boldly can come. But I'm just going to leave you with this last thought.

The Apostle Paul actually says this, the aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. Listen, do you know what you're not going to be able to do? You're never going to be able to love others when you have an evil conscience. It's got to come from a good conscience.

What is it that frees people to be the kind of people whose souls are just a wellspring of love for the glory of God? It's when the conscience is free. It's when I'm just free to love. You know what happens when the conscience is accusing all the time? You're stuck on self.

Woe is me. You're always thinking about you. You're always thinking about how you feel.

You're always thinking about the crack of the whip. But the gloomy condemnation of all of it, it's been lifted and the conscience is clear and there's just music and gladness in the soul. And what does that do? That just frees people.

The eye of the soul is no longer just focused on self, self, self, myself, my guilt, my condemnation, my depravity, my inward filth. It's taken up with the glories of Christ and I see Him loving and I hear Him saying, follow Me. Nothing will stoke the fires of love as this will.

Guilty, evil consciences just keep me obsessed with Me. Woe is Me. Glad consciences, what do they do? Oh, they just make for happy, loving, sacrificial, concerned about others, not about self kind of people.

That's how Scripture speaks. Listen, you know it. You all know it.

That to look at the blood, the sacrifice of Christ and have something supernatural happen to where you hear God speak peace to your conscience. That's what we all want. And that's what's being promised.

And that is what has to be in place for us to approach God. You've got to have a conscience like that. And if your conscience isn't, then I'll guarantee you this, you still have an aversion to God.

It's keeping you back. You still have a consciousness of sin. And you still have dead works.

Your religion is dead. And you can sniff it out by the conscience. The conscience knows.

God designed it. God supernaturally is in touch with it. Listen, don't be content as judgment day comes at us at lightning speed.

I got saved yesterday, 25 years old. Life goes by fast. Paul didn't see it coming.

There's that truck and you're gone. What's your conscience telling you? Are you sitting there? Does it tell you peace? That blood has washed you. You are clean.

And on that day of judgment where we all must appear, there will be no judgment for you. You will be declared perfect in the eyes of a holy God. You will be examined and not a speck, not a blemish will be found.

All due to Him who shed His blood on the tree. If you don't feel that, don't ignore this. Don't just go with wishful thinking.

Oh, it'll turn out okay in the end. Don't do that, brethren. Father, I pray that there would be something in all of this and the blood of Christ.

Please, Lord. I pray for a regenerate church. Well-saved individuals.

Oh, may the blood just wash the evil consciences right out of this place. I would ask it in the name of Him who did shed His blood. Amen.

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