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Morning Service

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The Blessings of a Functional Godly Conscience

Having a Godly conscience is a great source of joy and assurance. Our conscience can be likened to the deputy of the Holy Spirit, there to alert us to any thought or activity that leads to sin. God has given us all consciences so that we may look back on our lifestyle and be convicted of any and all sins that are hindering our walk with the Lord.

John shows us in his epistle the results of a properly functioning conscience and tells of the joy we will have by knowing for sure that we are children of God. During the time this epistle was written, there were many erroneous views of Christianity, much like there is today. Satan always seeks to attack and minimize Biblical teaching by the insertion of error. One of Satan's favourite tactics is to cripple or disable the conscience of a Christian through erroneous beliefs.

There is much confusion in the broader evangelical community as to who and what Christians are, but there really is no just cause for this. There is no accommodation for error in the belief of Jesus Christ. The Bible is very clear as to who Jesus is, what He taught, and what we must believe about Him. We must be aware that just because someone calls themselves a Christian, does not make them a Christian. John will tell us in his epistle what a Christian actually is.

When John says "we will know this" he's inviting us to currently and constantly look at our past actions for evidence that we are in the family of God. John points out there are only 2 families, children of God, and children of the devil and we can know them by what they believe and practice. A properly trained conscience will allow us to do this.

The Properly Trained Conscience

Paul gives us a wonderful example of what a clear conscience is. The Bible teaches us we should all strive to live with a clear conscience. Here are some examples of a strong conscience;

Acts 23:1

Paul is saying that he lives daily conforming his thinking and actions to conform with God. He's not saying he did it perfectly, none of us can, but he has made it his life's goal.

Acts 24:16

Endeavor to maintain a God conscience

Rom 13:5

Subject to the rulers placed over us for conscience sake.

1 Tim 1:19

Ignoring your conscience will lead to a shipwreck of faith. It's important to pay attention to a Biblically trained conscience.

1 Peter 2:19

Keep Christian integrity under trials for conscience sake.

1 Peter 3:15

Make sure you're not doing the things you are being blamed for. You may outwardly appear innocent, but internally, you may be guilty.

The Faulty Conscience

The faulty conscience is one that does not lead to Godliness or sanctification. Some of the signs are;

- A conscience can be distorted by a stronger view of sin than the forgiveness of Jesus Christ, causing them to wallow in their sins instead of growing in Grace. Notice that the Catholic church teaches that there cannot be an assurance of grace.
- Believing that you can lose your salvation in an instant, this is actually placing the power of sin over the power of God's grace.
- A conscience that allows the presence of sin to prevail in your life either through self justification or taking God's grace for granted as Paul warns about.

Some of the causes of faulty consciences are;

- Churches that strongly preach of the Law of God and the strength of sin, but not preaching on the strength of God's grace and how we have the power to mortify our sins.
- Churches that do not preach the Law, or do not practice discipline will give a heightened sense of assurance but there will be minimal or no evidence of sanctification.
- Churches that teach salvation can be lost and all you have is 'the current moment'
- Moralism; the belief that living a good clean life, working hard, and being likeable is a sign that you are sanctified and Heaven bound.

Application

As you listen ponder these questions;

- Is your conscious convinced that you have been born again?
- Do I examine myself enough, or at all?
- Am I silencing my conscious with excuses? Failing to see what needs to be addressed?
- Am I being honest with myself?
- Do I rely on my outward appearance as evidence of my salvation?

Scripture References

1 John 3:19-24 We will know by this that we are of the truth, and will assure our heart before Him (20) in whatever our heart condemns us; for God is greater than our heart and knows all things. (21) Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; (22) and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight. (23) This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us. (24) The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

Acts 23:1 Paul, looking intently at the Council, said, "Brethren, I have lived my life with a perfectly good conscience before God up to this day."

Acts 24:16 "In view of this, I also do my best to maintain always a blameless conscience *both* before God and before men.

Romans 13:5 Therefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath, but also for conscience' sake.

1 Timothy 1:18-19 This command I entrust to you, Timothy, *my* son, in accordance with the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you fight the good fight, (19) keeping faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith.

1 Peter 2:19 For this *finds* favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a person bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly.

1 Peter 3:16 and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame.

We are glad you have chosen to listen to this sermon and pray that it gives you strength, the want for obedience, and a desire to have God's abundant Grace mortify sin in your life. If you have any questions or comments please email chuck_ezell@yahoo.com.