

On Eagles' Wings Pt 19

by Don Courville

A good conscience is essential for genuine repentance and is achieved by identifying wrong attitudes, making a plan to change them, and taking action to make things right.

Duration: 23:21

Scripture: Exodus 22:1, Isaiah 40:28, Matthew 5:40, Luke 19:8

Topics: "Radio Show"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher shares two powerful stories of individuals who were convicted of their sins and chose to make restitution. The first story is about a construction worker who stole tools from his job site. After realizing his wrongdoing, he evaluated the attitudes that led him to steal and decided to ask for forgiveness and make restitution. His act of restitution not only brought him joy and gratitude, but also led the store owner and a salesman to become Christians. The second story is about a Christian floor salesman who was embezzling money from his business. After hearing a message on the importance of a good conscience, he too felt convicted and decided to face the owner and make things right. Despite his fear and financial pressure, he chose to do what was right. These stories serve as examples of the power of repentance, restitution, and the transformation that can occur when we allow God to work in our hearts.

Transcript

Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not? Neither is weary. There's no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increases strength.

Even the youth shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall. But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint.

We welcome you to One Eagle's Wings, a church revival ministry to encourage you, to encourage the pastor in the local church for revival. We trust that God will use us today in your life. Oswald Chambers said that conscience is that faculty in me which attaches itself to the highest that I know, and tells me what the highest I know demands that I do.

It is the eye of the soul which looks out either towards God or towards what it regards as the highest, and therefore conscience records differently in different people. If I am in the habit of steadily facing myself

with God, my conscience will always introduce God's perfect law and indicate what I should do. The point is, will I obey? I have to make an effort to keep my conscience so sensitive that I walk without offense.

I should be living in such perfect sympathy with God's Son that in every circumstance the spirit of my mind is renewed and I make out at once what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Well, we're talking about the conscience. We started last week talking about the conscience, and we're going into this year talking about our conscience.

Keeping a good conscience, a clean conscience, so vital to our walking with God, so vital to the church today. It seems like God always educates us down to the scruple. Scruple, Chambers said, is my ear so keen to hear the tiniest whisper of the Spirit that I know what I should do.

Grieve not the Holy Spirit, the scripture says. Seems like the Holy Spirit, He does not come in with a voice like thunder. His voice is so gentle that it's easy to ignore it.

The one thing that keeps the conscience sensitive to Him is the continual habit of being open to God on the inside. When there's any debate, quit. Why shouldn't I do this? You're on the wrong track.

There's no debate possible when conscience speaks. At your peril, you allow one thing to obscure your inner communion with God. Drop it, whatever it is, and see that you keep your inner vision clear, from Oswald Chambers.

Last week, during the recording of the session, I had to stop and get something right. My conscience was bothering me, and the Spirit of God saying, you can't speak on the conscience doing that. With this in your life, well, that's what it's about, taking time to stop.

Maybe that's why this program is good for you. It's a little different. Maybe you need to stop and get things right with God.

I don't know who you are. You don't know me. It doesn't matter.

The main thing is knowing Jesus. I'd like to know you. I believe God's placed me in this area to be an encouragement to the pastors, to the local churches, to believers, and also to invite you, if you're listening, to receive Christ as your Savior.

I'd love to lead you to Jesus Christ, to show you what a wonderful Savior He is. He lifted me up out of a terrible pit. I called on Him, and He saved me.

And you can call on Him, too. And He'll save you. We've been looking at some things on the conscience.

Last week we went over about steps to gain a good conscience, and we listed offenses. We were to list some offenses, and maybe it got you to thinking about some things. It's so easy to list the offenses of others, but we don't want to face the fact that maybe we've offended someone.

Now, I want to talk to you a little bit today about attitudes. What were the attitudes that caused your wrong words and actions? Remember, different actions, careless actions, improper actions, sensual actions. And then there was those words, those critical words, those judgmental words, those slanderous words.

What about the attitudes? It's one of the things today with youth. It's so important that they learn values, and our schools seem to be throwing out the godly values and throwing out God and teaching them

different values, and so they're getting different attitudes, and it's hurting them. And the youth don't know what's going on.

It's hard enough being a youth as it is, a teenager, a young person, a college person, without having somebody messing you up with some different social values that are ungodly, socialistic. It's hard enough to be trying to get things together. The key to asking forgiveness properly is identifying the wrong attitudes before naming the wrong words and actions.

Many times we'll want somebody to forgive us, but it just doesn't work out. We might go to them, and it just doesn't work out. Let me give you a couple illustrations.

One's the wrong way. The Lord convicted a young man of having stolen some building material from a store in which he was once employed. And so he determined to make it right, and he figured out that what he'd stolen was worth about five hundred dollars.

So he wrote out a check for that amount, and he went to the owner to confess his theft. And so he told the owner what he did. He asked forgiveness, handed the owner the check, and to his deep disappointment, the owner said, I'll take your check, but I won't forgive you.

Now that was the wrong way. Now let me give you the right way, and then we're going to come back and look at these things. A construction worker stole nine tools from the job site where he worked.

Well, the Lord convicted him of his need to ask for forgiveness and make restitution. However, before going to the owner, he sat down and carefully evaluated what attitudes had motivated him to steal those tools. That's very important now to notice that, the attitudes.

And as he did this evaluation, he realized that he did not need the tools, and he had money to buy them if he'd need them. So he traced his actions to an attitude of ungratefulness. So he wrote out a check, went to the owner of the company, and to him it was important for him to describe his offense accurately.

So he wrote it out on a card and held it in front of him as he talked to the owner. He said, quote, God has helped me to realize how ungrateful I was as an employee, and I have come to ask you to forgive me. The owner was shocked because he had trusted this employee, and he said, you do not need to ask me to forgive you.

The employee said, yes, I do, because that ungratefulness caused me to steal some tools from you. When the owner saw the humble broken spirit of the young man, he fully forgave him and told him to put his check of restitution in the church offering. That young man walked out with a new freedom in God's spirit.

Now, the first young man had focused on the wrong actions. As a result, he had not really fully comprehended his offense, and the owner, perhaps without knowing it, did not sense the genuine repentance which would have been evident had the young man traced his actions to wrong attitudes. Do you see what we're talking about? Attitudes need to be dealt with.

It's because of attitudes that we have actions. You ever see a little kid blow up and get mad and hit somebody else or do something? We say, well, that's a bad action. Yeah, that's right.

That's a bad action, but what was the attitude that produced it? This is one of the things we're trying to produce in our children, is we're trying to produce attitudes that are godly, so they'll be godly actions. In

our churches today, we have so many actions that are ungodly, carnal, fleshly, going on, and and they come from ungodly attitudes. And so what we're trying to do is turn around in our attitudes, and then we'll get our actions taken care of.

Now, why is it important to identify the attitude? I believe it will help us in producing genuine repentance. There are two essential reasons why wrong attitudes must be confessed before wrong actions. The first reason is that wrong attitudes are usually more hurtful and offensive than wrong words or actions.

You know, many times we don't even think about our attitudes, but we got actions all around us. We live among these actions. Now, the second reason is that if the offending attitude is not corrected, the person who is being asked for forgiveness is instinctively aware that the same offenses will probably be repeated.

And so, for many of us, this is why we never get victory in our lives. We don't deal with the root. We're always fiddling around with the fruit.

Now, let me give you some attitudes. Think about this. Are you proud? Are you deceptive? Are you willful? What about presumptuous? Selfish? You wouldn't be ungrateful, would you? How about unreliable? Are you disloyal? Unconcerned? Insensitive? Are you angry? These are all attitudes.

Now, the importance of working out a plan of restitution. Maybe you're beginning to say, well, maybe I need to think this thing through. If you want to be right and clean with God, it's important to work out a plan of restitution.

And one of the clearest evidences of genuine repentance is the willingness to make right any damage that was suffered by the one who knew wrongs. Many times we want forgiveness, but we don't want to take care of the damage. Several years back, I was convicted.

Well, during the Revival, after the Revival, I think it was in 85, when God dealt in my heart, there was something I'd never forgotten that I did when I was in school, when I was in junior high, and maybe I've shared this on this program before, but I had stole some money from the canteen and I'd sell a little candy, slip a little money in my pocket, and I don't know how much it was. I don't think it was too terribly much, but anyway, after years and years of that, God prompted me to write out a check to the school, and I did, and I wrote them a check and asked for forgiveness, and the principal wrote me back, and he was a friend of the family's, but he said, you didn't need to do that, but I did. He said, you didn't need to send the money, but I did.

I had to make right that wrong action that came from a wrong attitude. So if you stole items, they must be returned. This is one of the things about back up in Alliance, Nebraska.

We've been seeing God work in the last few years in the railroaders' lives, and it even went back down to Denver when they were bringing in all these materials that they've stolen. They didn't know what to do, and it reached all the way back down to Denver. What was happening? These guys were getting right with God.

They were cleansing up their lives. They've been stealing all these tools, and they're taking them back, and they didn't know what to do. Powerful witness.

So if you stole items, they must be returned. If you cannot return them, you should pay for them, and if you do not have the money to pay for them, at least one alternative plan should be offered to the person from

whom you ask for forgiveness. Maybe you can do something else.

Now, let me give you another illustration. There is a Christian floor salesman in a retail business, and he happened to be a deacon in his church, and he happened to be stealing some money from his business. As he was paid money by the customers, he'd take some for himself.

Now, after several years of embezzlement, he heard a message on the importance of a good conscience. And he came under conviction about his stealing. However, he was terrified at the prospect of facing the owner of the company, and he was already under financial pressure.

This could mean losing his job and even going to jail, but he determined that a good conscience was more important than any resulting consequences, and he reasoned that whatever penalties would be given to him were justly deserved. So, he went to the owner, confessed an attitude of covetousness and selfishness, and explained that he had demonstrated those wrong attitudes by taking money that should have gone into the cash register. He then explained that because he did not have the money to pay back what he had stolen, he'd be willing to work for the owner every Saturday doing whatever jobs the owner needed at home or at the store.

The owner was convinced of his sincerity and forgave him, and was very impressed with the diligent and faithful work which the man carried out each Saturday. Now, when that salesman achieved a good conscience, he experienced an overwhelming sense of joy and gratefulness. How about it? Are you full of joy and gratefulness? Ingratitude is an evidence in our lives of sin.

Well, his restitution resulted in a spirit of generosity to the Lord, and his witness ultimately caused the store owner to become a Christian, and the salesman became a dynamic soul winner. Isn't that powerful? Maybe we ought to just sit back for a little bit and let God minister to us from song in a song on the Holy of Holies. Let the Holy Spirit just speak to you.

Maybe there's something in your life that you've been struggling with, and you've never taken care of it. Your conscience just won't let it go. Let God work in your heart.

This material I'm sharing with you comes from Basic Youth Conflicts, How to Gain a Good Conscience. A lot of good material. There's other good programs and organizations around the country that can minister to you, and as a Revival Ministry, we want to encourage you to use what will help you.

We send a lot of literature that comes from Radio Bible Class or Jack Van Impey or Back to the Bible. We send this to these pastors overseas and these evangelists. It's important to get a hold of good material, to share good material.

This is why we're sharing this with you. Now let's get on into it for a few more minutes on How Restitution Communicates Genuine Repentance. Simply, you see, simply to give back items that were stolen does not fulfill the Spirit of God's law and restitution as set forth both in the Old Testament and the New Testaments, and if you want to look up some scriptures, you can look at Exodus 22 1 through 5 and Matthew 5 38 through 42.

Now, let's use the example of the man who stole the tools. Assuming that the tools were needed on the job, the owner would have been forced to go out and buy new tools. This would have involved time, more of his funds, most likely the cost of replacing the tools would have been greater due to the higher prices, right? This is just part of business.

Certain tools may not have even been available. The owner would have also lost the interest on the money which he used to buy the tools. Thus, the returning of the tools or paying what they were worth will not have covered the cost that the owner incurred because of the theft.

I think a lot of times we never think about just how costly sin is to those that we sin against. Now, for this reason, God's law calls for at least a double repayment of what was stolen. That's Exodus 22.

Now, oxen were used for plowing, pulling carts, treading out corn, and other functions. They were vital tools to their owner. Thus, an owner suffered a greater loss when an ox was stolen than when a sheep was stolen.

And in the Sermon on the Mount, if you remember, Jesus emphasized the importance of repaying more than what was stolen. If any man will sue thee at the law and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also, he said in Matthew 5 40. And, of course, the classic example illustration was Zacchaeus.

To have a good conscience, Zacchaeus offered to pay back four times what he had stolen. You know, he really got saved. But when Jesus called Zacchaeus to come to him, the crowd murmured because Zacchaeus had wronged many people.

You can imagine what it had been like. Here comes Jesus and all these good people around, and he picks out the scum of the bunch, the biggest bum in town. Wow, they couldn't believe it.

His reputation was marred by all of his fraudulent dealings, and when he came to Christ, he said, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. Now notice, not only was he going to give away back four times, but he says, Half I'm going to give to the poor, and if I've taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore to him fourfold. It's important to note that Zacchaeus purposed to have a good conscience only after he had met the Lord.

I think many in our churches today need to be saved. They can do things that unsaved do without any conviction by the conscience, and they just need to be saved. And this is one of the things we've seen in this particular revival movement that we're involved with.

When we give God enough time in a church, we see people get saved. We had one church up in our area where the revival started, where one of the deacons got saved, and this is not unusual to see a pastor get saved, or something like this, or Sunday school teachers. People that have thought they were saved, but their lives were just miserable.

What about it? Is God speaking to you? Is he working in your heart? Well, we want to be an encouragement to you. The only thing that matters is God, and being right with him. How about it? Hmm? You know, one of the things about the Holy Spirit, the scripture says, when he comes, he will convict the world of sin.

Chambers said, the great miracle of the grace of God is that he forgives sin. You know, the human race needs forgiveness. And it is the death of Jesus Christ alone that enables the divine nature to forgive and to remain true to itself in doing so.

God couldn't forgive you if there hadn't been a payment for your sin. My friend, Jesus Christ died on the cross for your sin. The greatest need of conscience today is to have our sins forgiven, and this is what Jesus is all about.

He's not in the condemning business. John 3 16, 17, 18 tells us that God loves us, and that he didn't come to condemn us. We were already condemned.

For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. My friend, you need forgiveness.

Forgiveness means not merely that I am saved from hell and made right for heaven. No man would accept forgiveness on such a level. Forgiveness means that I am forgiven into a recreated relationship into identification with God in Christ.

The miracle of redemption is that God turns me, the unholy one, into the standard of himself, the Holy One, by putting into me a new disposition, the disposition of Jesus Christ. Reading from Chambers. Oh, won't you let him come in and set you free? Won't you let him lift you up? Won't you let him do something in your heart? Won't you let the Lord Jesus Christ change your life and come in? This has been On Eagle's Wings.

We trust that it's been an encouragement to you. If we can help you, you feel free to write us. You could just write to On Eagle's Wings, Box 1100, Webb City, Missouri, 64870.

We'd love to hear from you. If we can help you, Pastor, get a hold of me. Church leader, if you need some help, you get a hold of me.

We're for your encouragement. God bless you. Have a good day.

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