

Conscience Void of Offense

by Edsel Troutmann

The sermon emphasizes the critical need for a clear conscience through genuine repentance and the correction of sin in our lives and relationships.

Duration: 56:48

Scripture: Psalm 51:4, Matthew 6:33, Romans 14:19, Galatians 6:1, James 4:17, 1 John 1:9

Topics: "Conscience"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of getting saved at a young age to avoid the consequences of sin later in life. He believes that everyone has a responsibility to correct the negative effects of their sins on others. The preacher also criticizes the idea of relying solely on logic and scripture to determine someone's conversion, instead of the guidance of the Holy Spirit. He highlights the need for individuals to not only seek forgiveness from God but also to forgive themselves and confess their sins to others.

Transcript

8-11 For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent. For I perceive that the same epistle has made you sorry, though it were but for a season. Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that you sorrowed to repentance.

For you were made sorry after a godly manner that you might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of. But the sorrow of the world works death.

For behold this selfsame thing that ye sorrowed after a godly sort. Now listen, what carefulness, what carefulness it worked in you. What clearing of yourself.

Yea, what indignation. Yea, what fear. Yea, what zeal.

Yea, what revenge. In all things you have approved yourself to be clear in this matter. Heavenly Father we confess our dependence upon thee tonight.

We pray that you would add your richest blessing to the reading of your word. Unite our hearts to fear thy name that we might sanctify this hour to you. For we ask it in Jesus name and all the people said out loud, Amen.

God bless you, you may be seated. I want to pursue an area of concern tonight. It is not often spoke of in camp meetings or revivals.

Yet I believe that the problems that arise in this area is responsible for the lack of revival as much as any specific area that I know of. The area that I'll be speaking about tonight is the failure to obtain and maintain a conscience void of offense. Or maybe we could put it another way, a failure to have a clear conscience.

A failure to have a clear conscience. You probably all recognize the New Testament passage that I read to you. You pastors have likely preached from this scripture time and time again.

The exegetical theme of this few verses that I read to you is repentance. This is one of the great New Testament passages in which the Apostle Paul is dealing and laying down the biblical principles that govern genuine repentance opposed to counterfeit repentance. I tell you genuine repentance is a rare commodity in the evangelical world of our day.

The influence of fundamentalism, in particular dispensational fundamentalism, is so great that hardly anyone has escaped its influence. Without thinking, without thinking I say, we have picked up so many of their clichés, their theology. Their pervasiveness is in the media and the books almost unmeasurable in modern America.

Martin Martyr, the Dean of Church Historians in America at the University of Chicago identifies this influence by saying that all of evangelicalism has come under the influence of what he has called, and he coined a word, baptisification. All evangelicalism has come under the influence of modern fundamentalism until it has molded our thinking. One area that this influence is most noticeable is the theology of salvation.

A theology, I tell you, that does not demand repentance. That does not demand the repentance. An emphasis that they find that flows out of their understanding of the atonement in Christ.

Do you want to know if you've been affected by this theology? Let me just ask you some questions. Do you use the cliché, accept Jesus Christ as your personal savior? Are you here tonight? If you are, blink your eyes, because I'm talking to you. Do you use that cliché, accept Jesus Christ as your personal savior? You say, Brother Charles, what's wrong with that statement? Well, I'm not going to tell you now if you want to know, come talk after.

Do you talk about walking down the Roman road? Do you talk about going down the Galatian road? What about the idea of leading someone to accept Christ as the personal savior who has never been awakened by the Holy Spirit? Then bringing that person to a confession of faith by avowing an agreement with a few scriptures. What has happened is that we have traded the witness of the Holy Spirit for logic. Somehow believing that if a person mentally agrees with a certain number of passages of Scripture that conversion has occurred.

Now I'm not suggesting, and please do not misunderstand me, I'm not throwing stones. I live in a glass house. But I suggest to you that we need to understand what's happening in this area of repentance.

Some of their own ministers are beginning to awaken and call for a return to the biblical doctrine of salvation. A biblical doctrine that demands repentance as a condition for saving faith. The whole controversy of lordship salvation.

MacArthur and all of the gang that's on the radio that's been battling this out. The underlying issue is repentance is all of a sudden coming back into vogue. We are saved by faith alone.

But as the old reformers said, it's not a faith that's alone. It's a faith that's accompanied by demonstrating that we have genuinely repented. We've cleared ourselves.

Now you're saying amen, but I ask you, are you living, are you demonstrating in your life? Paul writes this to the church. This message of repentance is to the church, not the world. It's the church that he's dealing with.

In the church at Corinth there's arisen a very serious problem, really a serious scandal concerning some sexual immorality. Apparently these Christians had not yet learned a proper attitude towards sin, for it appeared from the content of Paul's letter to them that they were condoning the sin, at least unwilling to discipline the guilty party. Pastors, are you here tonight? Say amen.

It's a difficult thing to have church discipline in our day, isn't it? It's a difficult thing to bring people to any kind of a sense of responsibility in this area of church discipline. Paul faced that same problem. Paul wrote at least two letters, 1 and 2 Corinthians, to try to shake these Corinthian Christians from that spiritual indifference towards sin.

Paul was not only concerned that sin be confessed, but he also wanted to teach them that it must be corrected. Note the distinction that I'm making. Sin's confessed, but sin's corrected.

Sin's confessed, but sin's corrected. Even though sin must be confessed to God, because sin is ever and always an offense against God. Psalm 51 and verse 4, the psalmist made it so clear when he said these words, against thee and thee only have I sinned and done this great evil in thy sight.

What about Bathsheba? What about Uriah? What about the Israelites? Did he not sin against them? Not properly. Because sin is always and ever against God and against God alone. The thing that makes sin, sin is the relationship that that act has to God.

Because sin is accountable wrongness before God. John tells us in 1 John 3, 4, Brother Smith and I were talking as we were driving this evening about this passage, where John tells us that sin is a transgression of the law of God, implying God's law, a lawlessness, a disregard for something that God has. Now, as I give with one hand, let me take it back with the other.

Though sin is an offense against God, an accountable wrongness before God, yet we must never lose sight of the fact that other persons are often involved. Even at times can I use the term victims of our sins. And where the action in question involves someone else, there must be on our part of the offending person a deep desire to correct any and all wrongs unto that other person, the offended person.

Do our very best once we come to the light of saving grace, once we come to the place where we've been awakened, once we've come to the place where we've been justified, and the Spirit witnesses that we are a child of God as the offender. I'm going to do everything I can to heal the offense against the offended. According to the Apostle Paul here in this passage, we'll need to take time to go through it all, but I think there are at least three things involved.

There's the job of getting right with God. But there's also the job of getting right with yourself. Will you be honest with me tonight? I want somebody to respond.

How many of you had trouble in forgiving yourself when you came to God? Can I see your hands? You struggled in getting right with yourself. Sitting in the chaplain's office at GCI, a young man came in who'd been convicted of sexual crimes probably in his mid-thirties. Oftentimes they looked much, much older than they really are.

Terry sat there just wringing his hands. And I began to talk to Terry and I said, Terry, God wants to help you. And he just almost seemed like he was an animal in a cage.

And he said, chaplain, how in the world could God want to help me? And then he would dip his head and wring his hands and dip his head and wring his hands. I said, Terry, God loves you. How could He love me? I said, Terry, chaplain Miller loves you.

I said, Terry, I love you. And he stood up and he began to pace in the office wringing his hands. And he stopped right next to the desk and he said to me, if you love me, would you hug me? I wasn't a homosexual, believe me.

It was a man who was struggling just with the fact of accepting the fact of his own sin. I said, Terry, sure I would. And I put my arms around him and just like he was shot with a gun, he fell to the floor, burst out crying, and began to pray.

Getting right with yourself. A lot of people are struggling tonight and I wouldn't be surprised that I'm speaking to some out here tonight. You still have never come to the place of being right with yourself.

Clear. Getting right with God. Getting right with myself.

But I've also got to get right with you. I've got to get right with others. The third prong, can I say to that plug, and one in which that third prong has largely been lopped off in the minds of many evangelical Christians.

Getting right with others. I heard a popular speaker, and I love to hear him, tremendous preacher, I wish I could preach as well as he, talking about a man who had defrauded quite a lot of money. But now he had become a Christian and his conscience was bothering him.

And the pastor was saying to him, don't worry about it, it's in the past. Don't worry about it, it's in the past. Well granted, it is in the past.

And in a sense, I don't have to worry about it. But I do have an obligation under God to correct it. I have an obligation under God to correct it.

This last area that I want to concentrate on getting tonight, and that is getting right with others. A conscience void of offense. Having a clear conscience so that I can face any of you tonight with that sense that I'm clear with you as far as I know.

One of these areas of repentance is suggested in these words, what clearing of yourselves. You remember the clearing that you made in your life as you came to the Lord Jesus Christ? That's one of the wonders and the beauty of getting saved, young people and children, just as a young person. You don't get involved in a lot of sin that has to be taken care of later.

I wish I would have never gone back on God as a little lad in the old evangelical church at South Rockwood, Michigan to live clean all of those years. I wouldn't have had to do a lot of things that I did to

get right with God. These words, Paul highlights a principle that is repeatedly touched on throughout Scripture, and that is every one of us have a responsibility to correct, if possible, all of the ill effects of our sins as they touch other persons.

Are you again here tonight? Can somebody out there please, at least blink an eye, help me out? Am I preaching a false doctrine? I said to you, every one of us has a responsibility to correct, if possible, all of the ill effects of our sins as they touch other people. That's what I'm speaking about when I'm suggesting the theme of this message. A conscience void of offense.

No doubt this is one of the reasons why people do not get clear with God, or they do not stay clear with God. Let me tell you, God never bypasses this step. God never overlooks anything.

God never ignores this important part of repentance. It cannot be laid aside. God is not having any end-time clearance sale on salvation.

If you're getting right with God, let me tell you, it's going to cost as much tonight as it did no matter when you ever got right with God. Clearing ourselves always involves the person and or persons with whom we were involved in sin, directly or sometimes indirectly. We're fooling ourselves to think we are clear with God if we've not taken every possible means to clear ourselves with men.

John reinforces this principle of keeping a clear conscience in the simple words of 1 John chapter 3 and verse 21, where John records these words, Beloved, if our hearts condemn us not, and the word heart could just as easily be conscience, if our conscience condemn us not, then, then have we confidence toward God. It's one of those if-then kind of constructions. If this is true, then this will be true.

This is never true, the then part is never true until the if is true. If you do not have a clear conscience, I can assure you, you'll never have confidence with God. You'll never have confidence with God.

Hebrews 10.22 also touches on this same matter when the writer said, Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled, notice, from an evil conscience. Now, a true heart is a heart that's gone through the process of clearing, described here in Old Testament language as sprinkled from an evil conscience. Oh, the joy of having a conscience void of offense, that there is nothing on my conscience, that as far as I know between God and me, as far as my own relationship, and as far as everybody else, I am clear.

That is shouting ground. And maybe the reason why there isn't more shouting is because there is not more clearing. There's not more clearing.

Reflecting on our life, our relationship with God, and our relationship with others, our conscience becomes like a sounding board. It tells us all is clear. There's nothing to confess, to correct.

What a wonderful place to be. To be able to lay your head down on your pillow at night, knowing that all is clear. Just between you and I in the fence post, I want to say, Hallelujah! Praise God! For the privilege, the power of God to give us, if we're obedient, a clear conscience.

Let me repeat. And I know a statement like this to a sensitive person brings them into bondage. And please, I do not want to bring anybody into bondage.

I don't want to hurt anybody tonight. But I feel like it's an area that needs to be emphasized. To have a clear conscience.

We must know that there is no words or actions or attitudes towards others that have not been confessed and corrected to the best of our ability. Now don't misunderstand me. I speak here of correction and confession and restitution only.

And if we have caused others hurt, caused others hurt. One of the tricks that the enemy will play on us, and I'm sure he plays it on everybody, and that is to get us to erase our guilt, our own troubled conscience, by blaming the other person. Now none of you have done that, but they do it up in Ohio.

And they did it down in Hope Sound. Blaming the other person. The devil gets our attention centered in what they did, rather than on what we did.

It's possible to feel free as long as you can balance guilt and blame. As long as you can balance it. What's much recognized is a real difference between feeling guilty though and being guilty.

The word guilty actually means two things. The common way of expressing the meaning of this word today is feeling bad about something. Somebody was telling today about running, going faster than they should, and they was given a ticket.

They had to pay a fine, even though they didn't feel like they had done wrong. This is what we call psychological guilt. But it should really mean, when we talk about guilt, because of what I did, I am under the displeasure of God, if I feel like it or if I do not feel like it.

A whole lot of people are trying to get away with things spiritually today that they ought not, because they are hiding under the guise, I don't feel bad about it. Feeling bad about it or not feeling bad about it has nothing to do with it. And talking about an objective wrong that needs to be corrected, even though you may not, at this moment, feel bad about it.

Have you ever played on the teeter-totter? Is that what you call them down here, that board you put on a bar and one person gets on the other end and the other person? Do you remember teeter-tottering with a person that was almost exactly your same weight? Same weight. And you could actually balance that board. You kind of lift it off the ground and they lift it off the ground.

You are careful. You could just stop that thing out there. It was balanced.

It didn't go up. It didn't go down. Now, do you remember what happened if you did it or if they did it to you? They jumped off real quickly.

You went crashing to the ground. The balance is no longer there. All the weight is on your side of the board.

Have you ever heard someone say like this, They got what they deserved. Or, I don't feel bad, man. You should listen to what they did to me.

Trying to balance it. What if that isn't really trying to balance or erase our guilt by blaming someone else? By blaming someone else. Now, in order to get clear with God, you've got to come to the place where you see only what you've done and forget about what they did.

I'm going to give you an obligation between now and tomorrow. I want you to read Psalm 51 and see if you can find any reference to they or her. Psalm 51 is that place where David makes his confession.

He did not say, If she had not been taking a bath that night out on the roof, I wouldn't have got in trouble. That's very likely true. She probably shouldn't have been out on the roof taking a bath.

But you do not hear David at all making that kind of confession. He's not trying to balance at all. He's just saying, Against thee and thee only have I sinned.

I acknowledge my transgression. I recognize my sin. I own it.

We used to sing a song in camp meeting, not my brother nor my sister, but it's me, O Lord, standing in the need of prayer. Is it you tonight? Or are you trying to balance it by blaming someone else for something that you yourself is responsible for? Another trick the enemy will try to convince you to do will be to confess some superficial things rather than deal with the real underlying issue. And here's an area where many of us get in trouble.

Before we can truly repent, before we can effectively confess and effectively correct the wrong, we must prayerfully determine the real thing that needs corrected and confessed. There's no sense of seeking forgiveness for speaking sharp words when the underlying issue is pride. Are you with me tonight? There's no sense of seeking forgiveness for some sharp words that have been spoken if the real issue is pride.

It's much easier to say, I'm sorry for having spoken sharp words to you than to say, I demonstrated pride in that act. It's costly to be honest in this area of repentance. It's costly.

Here's an area I think where family members are most vulnerable. The tendency of most of us, maybe I'm including too many of us, I don't know, but I wouldn't be surprised it's most of us, is that we try to get by with as little hurt as we possibly can in confession. So often confessions are empty and they're meaningless.

They really do not deal with the deep, hard issues. And a person does not get clear with God. Here are some examples.

I've heard it. You've heard it. I was wrong, but so were you.

What you're actually saying, in fact, you were more wrong than I was. That's an elliptical comparison. What you're really saying is that you were more wrong than I was wrong.

You don't finish it. The very first church I pastored after I left God's Bible school many, many, many, many, many, many, many years ago was in St. Albans, West Virginia. Wesleyan Methodist Church on Coal River Road.

They should never have sent a flatland Michigander to the hills of West Virginia, but they did. It was a mistake to begin with. I feel sorry for those poor hillbillies from the moment I got there.

And they, I'm sure they should never have had me. I was a young man, a young pastor. I was struggling to be a good pastor.

I really was. I was working at it. Sacrificing and praying and studying, trying to live a good life.

Work and repair on the parsonage in the church. I stayed just one year, that's all they allowed me to stay. They gave me one of those votes that was more nays than yays.

Kind of deflated my ego at the moment. When I went to conference, Brother Wilcox said, join the gang. He had already experienced it in his life.

I had problems with one of the dear gentlemen there who was a very wealthy man. And he came to conference and said to me, I was working in the kitchen at that time, at the old victory camp, and he came to me at the back door of the kitchen and he said, and this is what his words to me were, I'll forgive you of all the mean things you did to me if you'll forgive me. Now are you with me in what he's saying? I will forgive you of all the mean things you did to me if you'll forgive me.

Now being honest, I was telling the truth sometime when perhaps I ought not to have. I was his pastor and he was quite well off. He was a plant superintendent.

He took six vacations to Florida that year I was there. And he was expecting my wife and I to live on \$34 a week, and we had a little baby at that time, and a \$57 a month car payment. And I was trying desperately to pass through that church and never worked.

Now that was a trick, believe me, to keep that thing going. Well, I was stupid enough one day to talk to him about it. I invited him to my study and I said, would you sit down, Brother? And he sat down and I commenced to say to you, how in the world can you expect me as your pastor to live like I live and you just carelessly waste money going to Florida six times this year? None of your business with what I do with my money.

And I said, you're right, but it's my business if you go to hell or not and how you spend your money determines that. Will somebody say amen out there? Because that's true. Well, obviously I didn't win friends and influence people at that particular moment unless I influenced him to dislike me, and he certainly did.

But he came to conference and oh, he was distressed. I'll forgive you for all the mean things you did to me if you'll forgive me. Well, he sought to clear himself.

And maybe he did. I don't know. I'm not judging.

I really, I said sure, I'll forgive you. Why not? I hope he goes to heaven. I really do.

I want him to go to heaven. But it doesn't really sound like he was honest about the business of clearing himself. He was blaming, trying to balance his guilt by blaming me.

And even if I was wrong completely, saying to me something like that isn't saying, Brother Troughton, I want to be clear with God. I know we had some disagreements and misunderstandings and you're leaving, but I want you to be clear and I want to be clear. Will you forgive me? That's costly.

It's cheap to say I'll forgive you if you forgive me. You are here tonight, aren't you? I am talking about revival tonight in case you didn't know it. Talking about one of the reasons why the church is not doing what God wants it to do.

The devil will surely tell you don't worry about it. It happened so long ago and it's a tragedy how many people put off getting right with others for a long time. I prayed on this side of the altar so many times and

invariably when someone is struggling, many, many times it's because they are struggling with an issue that they should have taken care of years ago that they did not.

The devil is trying to tell them now don't worry about it. It happened a long time ago. Well, if it's something you ought not to worry about, why is it still bothering you? Why does it still rise in coming up before you if it isn't something that you ought to have forgotten about? I'm sure it's the prevenient grace of God bringing you, bringing you to that place of repentance and clearing so you can stand with a conscience void of offense and have confidence before God.

Let me remind you, time will never erase God's demands to God's will. Always bring you back to that point of obedience. Probably one of the more frequent tricks of the devil is to tell you it'll cost you some money.

You can't afford it. And it may. Many people have gotten to all kinds of difficulty.

Some just outright stealing. Nobody steals in Alabama. But I tell you, the prisons of Florida are filled with them.

And I wouldn't be surprised if all the thieves went to prison. There wouldn't be enough room to put them there. I was preaching this message at the Christian Missionary Alliance Church.

They had some thieves in the Christian Missionary Alliance Church. The Bible Methodists do not. The next week a young man came back to me and he said, Pastor, he said, I took care of it.

I said, well, Dave, what did you take care of? He said, well, I stole the motor from the plant. I worked at the Ford Motor Company. But I took it back.

I said, well, wonderful. What did they say? They didn't say anything. They didn't know I took it back.

They didn't know I took it back. Somehow he got it out in his lunch box or work box or something and he put it back in the work box and took it back. Well, thank God at least he got it back.

And maybe God was gracious to him. But I'm talking about when you just go and you have to knock on the door and look them square in the face and say to them, I was a thief with a capital T. When I came out of the army, and I confess tonight nobody else is doing it. I was not a Christian.

A group of us guys running around town in a car decided to steal a keg of beer. How in the world would you steal a keg of beer? So we had a couple of fellas drive through the alley. One was to open the trunk.

The other was to pick up the keg and toss it into the trunk, shut the trunk and drive away. Thank God we didn't get caught. But God knew.

And I wanted to get right with God. And wouldn't you know they'd call Brother Reagan for evangelist at God's Bible School. Can you remember that? 1957.

The opening revival. And Miss Rice and I and you sitting up in classroom three talking about it and me crying and groaning and praying. So I wrote a letter to Augie.

Dear Augie. Augie's Bar, Monroe, Michigan. I got saved.

I stole a keg of beer. Some other guys, but I didn't tell them. I stole the keg of beer.

Not they, but me. And I want you to forgive me. Augie never did.

Right. And for some reason God never released that keg of beer. It kept rolling in front of me.

Rolling in front of me. Months went by. I never was clear.

I went home to see my mother and I decided to go to see Augie. And Augie's Bar was a stinky place. Bars are stinky places.

I think all of them. But this was especially a stinky place. He was an Italian fellow, pizza maker.

I walked in. I said, is Augie here? I didn't know if that was the name of the guy or not. And he said, yes, he's back in the back.

And I went back to the back. And I identified myself. I said, did you receive a letter from a young man in Cincinnati, Ohio, confessing feelings? And he said, yes.

Are you the man? And he spoke with kind of a broken English. And he called his daughter kind of rejoicing. Look, he said, this is the man that wrote the letter about stealing the keg of beer.

He's here. All he was really to rejoice about. And he wanted to make me a pizza.

He wanted me to sit down and eat a pizza with him. I said, no, no, just forgive me. Let me pay you.

Don't worry about it. It's clear. It's free.

I walked out of that bar feeling light, not because I had drunk any beer, but because I cleared myself with God. And do you know what? Even though I'm telling you that story tonight, that barrel has never rolled by me one time since that moment. And I'm not saying that to brag about my sin, but to illustrate getting right with God.

Clear. Clear. Clear.

Clear with God. My conscience has no offense. I have a confidence towards God in this area tonight.

I say hallelujah. And you ought to say hallelujah too if your conscience is clear. If it's not, we'll dismiss you and let you go clear them.

Because we'll have a better service tomorrow. I'm not sure where the telephones are or where you might need to go. Maybe the Lord will let you do it by letter.

I don't know. Let's get it done. Unpaid bills.

So refreshing to hear a radio speaker. Do you listen to Larry Burkett down here talk about people with debt? They're trying desperately to wiggle out of it. And good old Larry takes the screwdriver and turns it down and says, God's never going to let you out of that debt.

Even if you file bankruptcy, you're still going to have to make it right with them. Tighten the screw down and I'm saying hallelujah. I'm almost to the prison by the time they get done.

Sometimes I'll sit there in the parking lot and listen to the rest of it. Refreshing. Refreshing to hear someone talk that way.

Refreshing. I'm utterly amazed at all of the shady deals that supposed Christians do. Have you ever heard a Christian talk this way? It scares me, but they say they're Christians anyway.

Sure took them to the cleaners. Sure pulled on those dumb heads. Usually this comes by buying something that has value.

And you know it has value and they don't know it has value. And you're trying desperately to get out of there before they do know it has value. And you're saying to yourself, dummy, sure got one on you this time.

But let me tell you something. A heart that's pure does not talk that way. Does not talk that way.

A man I knew reacting to a renting I should say to a family in my church, the old Harrison Chapel where you've been evangelist a couple of times. Their son burned down the barn playing with matches in a hay mound. That's something I've never been able to figure out exactly why kids would play with matches in a hay mound.

The good man who was a preacher, Wesleyan Methodist preacher. Talk about our own time, can't we? Try to get that lay person to not say anything at all. He wasn't trying to get that lay person to lie.

Just don't say anything at all. Let the insurance company think it was an accident. Are you with me? Insurance is kind of a tricky thing, isn't it? Thank God I've never had any accidents that I had to file claims or was ever tempted to be dishonest in my claims.

But me thinks there's some people that might need to go back to the insurance company and say, I stole some money. I stole some money. You didn't say anything wrong, but your silence condemns you when you don't tell the truth about what occurs.

I know this man is crooked because the same fellow owns some land near a lake. It's now quite a large lake outside of Columbus, Ohio. And he learned that the Ohio State was out to purchase the land that surrounded that lake.

Scrub land, waste. He hurriedly moved all his scrubby cows onto that land to make it appear like it was more valuable than what it was. You are here, aren't you? Is that good business or is that cheating? Is that dishonesty? Sure seems like it to me.

Sounds like he's a crook to me. I keep my hands on my pocketbook every time I get around him. When you shake hands with him, make sure you count your fingers.

You're going to get them all back. When he dies, unless he gets right with God, the funeral director is going to have to have a corkscrew to get him in the ground. He's crooked to the heart.

He's not clear with God. Not clear with God. God demands that we clear our conscience and live with a conscience void of offense.

Somebody was talking about being married 32 years. We'll be married 32 years this year in August. And my wife never does anything wrong, but I sure do.

And I go to bed at night. And I want to desperately go to sleep. But God has given me a special conscience.

I mean, it just bugs me to death. And I thank God for it. Lying there.

And I think she expects it. That makes it worse. Alice, yes, forgive me.

I want to be clear with God. I want to be clear with God. You say sanctified people do not do things that need that kind of adjustment.

Well, you try to figure it out theologically, but I'm telling you, I tell my wife to forgive me because my conscience is not void of offense at that moment. Clear. Psychologists have discovered that many of the physical maladies that people are suffering today comes because of unconfessed problems.

The whole area of counseling is actually burgeoning. In the next 20 years, if the Lord carries, there will be literally hundreds of thousands of openings for persons to deal with this area of counseling. Counseling, O. Holbert Mowrey, the past president of the American Psychological Association, in a book entitled A Crisis in Psychiatry and Religion, after having been the president of that society for some time, said that the vast majority of people in mental hospitals are not there because of some functional problem, some systemic problem.

They're there because they did not deal with sin. They did not deal with sin. Every revival, I don't care where you read in history, and remember when I'm talking about revival, I'm talking about the church.

God revives the church. The church evangelizes the world. We're not evangelizing here tonight.

I'm not anyway. I come as a revivalist to stir up the church that after camp you can go back and do what God wants you to do. Every revival, without exception, confession and repentance and restitution has been a key issue.

1952, God's Bible School. I was a high school student. I can't remember who the evangelist was, but I distinctly remember a service that I'm sure unless my mind goes bad, I'll never forget.

L.R. Day was the president. Way into the evening hours, late hours of the night, that service lasted. Young people up around the altar, young people praying back in the seats.

I've never seen a service in all my life where confession became paramount. I'm not talking about foolishness. I'm not talking about just doing something because someone else did it.

But I'm talking about confession. Little things. The strangest thing were girls were saying, I went into your room and borrowed some hairpins and you didn't know it.

Now does that sound dumb? But when God the Holy Ghost came on that campus in that revival in 1952, His presence was so real that very small things, things that normally may have been set aside, all of a sudden were magnified and they became aware of it. And they wanted to make it clear. And I'm saying, dear Bible Methodist friends in Alabama, that if God is ever going to use us as a church, as an effective means of evangelism, we must come to the place where we live with a conscience void of offense.

I don't know where the confessions need to be made. But I know this, having worked on a college campus for nine years, how many young people come to that campus filled with bitterness toward dad and mom. Now who is responsible? I don't know.

Sitting in my office as I counsel with them, I tell them this, you're never going to get right with God and you're not never going to get right with God until you get right with dad and mom. Young people, are you here tonight? Dad and mom may be in fact responsible, but you're never going to get right with God as long as you allow bitterness to arise in your heart and stay there. Wives come to my office and talk about the bitterness that they have toward their husbands or husbands talk about the bitterness that they have towards their wives.

Some 30, 40, 50 years old, they've carried this for years and wonder why they've never been clear before God. Well, I'll tell you what, time is not going to erase God's demands to God's law. Never is it going to change.

God will bring you back every single time to that issue until you make it right. Don't go out into eternity with a conscience that's not clear. Because I tell you, you will not have confidence in the day of judgment.

Where are you tonight? Pastors? Lay people? Maybe there's a gentleman here who would have to go to a pastor and say I'll forgive you of all the mean things you did to me. If you'll forgive me, at least do that. Break the ice.

Pastors, conference presidents, husbands, wives, children, maybe some letters. At one of the early Keswick conventions in Keswick, England, someone preached on repentance. The record says that the post office ran out of stamps and postcards of the hundreds and hundreds of people who were making right.

I can assure you tonight, if your conscience is not clear, you do not have confidence toward God and you never will. Never will. And there's only one price to pay and that is clear it.

It's costly. But I tell you, you might be like Augie's Bar, high stepping it out, saying thank God, thank God, thank God that stinky old beer barrel is gone. I'm free.

I'm clear. It doesn't bother me anymore. It has not bothered me for many, many years.

It never will bother me. I can go to the very presence of God. I can stand at the judgment clear before God.

Clear before God. Clear before God. I ask you tonight, are you clear? You might fool me, but you'll never fool God.

Let's stand together as the Gessner's sing tonight.

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