

Reconciliation

by Harold Vaughan

The importance of seeking a clear conscience and making things right with God and others.

Duration: 46:37

Scripture: Matthew 5:23, Matthew 18:15

Topics: "Reconciliation"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares stories of individuals who have sought forgiveness and reconciliation with others. He emphasizes the importance of having a clear conscience and not allowing guilt to cloud one's thinking. The speaker also encourages the audience to be open and honest with their small circle of friends, as hiding one's true self can hinder personal growth. He concludes by offering practical guidelines for resolving conflicts and seeking to put things right when relationships have gone wrong.

Transcript

Now, Father, in Jesus' name, I pray you would have a word for every person in the building tonight, young people, middle-aged people, older people. Father, may your word tonight find a lodging place, and Father, may we be benefited and profited by being here this evening. Thank you for what you're going to say to our hearts, we pray in Jesus' name.

Amen. If Christianity is anything, it's a religion of the conscience. 1 Timothy chapter 1 and verse 5 says that the end of the commandment, the whole goal of the word of God is charity or love out of a pure heart and of a good conscience and a sincere faith.

The whole goal of the word of God is a good conscience. Hebrews 13, 18 says, brethren, pray for us for we trust that we have a good conscience in all things willing to live honestly. Paul said in Acts chapter 24, herein do I exercise myself always.

He said, I exercise myself. In other words, he works at it. He said, I exercise myself always to have had a conscience void of offense toward God and toward man.

Obtaining a clear conscience is essential, and maintaining a clear conscience is imperative for the child of God. And there are two instances in the Bible, two instances in the Bible when you need to clear your conscience. Notice tonight, if you would, first of all, in Matthew chapter 18 and verse 15, two incident instances in the word of God when we need to clear our conscience.

Now, Jesus is speaking here in Matthew chapter 18. I'm so thankful the Bible is so practical that gives us guidelines on how to negotiate life here on this planet. Matthew chapter 18, verse 15, Jesus said, moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, he offends you, he wrongs you, he sins against you.

Notice the next phrase, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone. Now you might want to underline the word alone, put a star by it, circle it because that's the most important word in that verse. If your brother wrongs you, you're to go to him and him alone.

If that doesn't pan out, there are further procedures. But for our message tonight, when somebody offends you, you need to go and seek to be reconciled. I was in Bible college.

When I went off to Bible's college, I was very naive. I thought it would be heaven on earth. I thought it would be paradise because here are spirit-filled born again people, and this is going to be great.

Well, it was great, but it wasn't paradise. I had a seven o'clock class, a theological class, which there should be some congressional statute against having theological classes at seven o'clock in the morning. But I had one and I was up early one morning because I had to be getting ready and my roommate came and I was brushing my teeth over the sink.

And he said, Harold, I need to talk to you. So I mumbled and I said, well, talk on brother, talk on. And, uh, he paused and then he said, Harold, I need to talk to you.

Well, I was kind of half asleep. I never had been a morning sort of person and, and, uh, but I could tell he wanted my attention. So I finished up and I looked at and looked, looked at him and, and, uh, he started hemming and hawing and kind of looking down at the floor and he put his hands in his pocket and he got real sheepish.

And he said, Harold, I, I need to talk to you. He said, I need to, I need to ask your forgiveness. So he was hemming and hawing and looking down at the floor, looking at his feet.

And here I was in a semi-conscious state. And finally he blurted it out. And he said, Harold, I, I need to ask your forgiveness.

He said, um, well, I, I stole your underwear. Now, when he said that, I can't, I became bright eyed, bushy tail and wide awake. And I said, you did what? He said, I stole your underwear.

And I thought, man, how low down can you get here? We are in Bible college and a fruit of the loom thief as a roommate, man, I couldn't believe it. And he said, I I'm asking you to forgive me. I said, I forgive you, brother.

And then he offered to give it back. And I said, that's all right, brother. You just hang on to it there.

You probably, probably need it worse than I do. And I didn't think a lot of it until about a month later, this character strutting around early one morning and a size 40, a fruit of the loom V-neck t-shirt. And I said to myself, the fruit of the loom Baron has struck again.

Now I don't like conflict and I don't like confrontation and I don't like trouble, but you know, the Bible says here, if your brother offends you, and I guess that would be an offense stealing you to go to him and him alone. Now I'm not advocating going to everybody on everything that falls out to our disliking, but there are instances when there has been obvious blatant sin and we're obligated according to the scripture to

confront, to seek a reconciliation and restitution. So I went to this brother and I said, I need to talk to you.

And I want to tell you immediately, his hands went back in his pocket and his eyes went down toward his feet, because I guess he knew what was coming. And we were able to clear up that, that matter of thievery. Now there's a time to go.

There's a time to go when others offend us, but there's a, another instance that's more likely. And that's in Matthew chapter five in verse 23, another instance when reconciliation needs to take place. You all know this text by heart, probably Matthew five, verse 23, Jesus said, therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar and they remember us that thy brother hath ought against thee.

In other words, you're coming to bring God a gift. And there you remember that, uh, you've offended your brother intentionally or unintentionally willingly or unwillingly knowingly or unknowingly, but it comes to your attention that you've offended him. Verse 24 says, leave there thy gift before the altar and go by way.

First be reconciled to thy brother and then come and offer your gift. Two instances in the Bible, when we need to seek a clear conscience, we need to seek reconciliation or restitution. Now I was in Benson, Arizona, many moons ago, my wife and I, I'll tell you back in those days, Benson, Arizona didn't have any, um, brand name motels.

They had the mom and pops variety. It was the kind of place when you open the door with that skeleton key. And you look at the carpet that you immediately have to go to a Kmart to get some flip-flops because you wouldn't definitely want to go barefoot that kind of fungi infected type carpet.

Well, it was this kind of a place. It was the kind of place where, uh, when we took a shower, we had company, the lizards would come in and right there in the shower, it was this kind of a place. Well, we were in this meeting and, um, a little girl came up after an evening service weeping about 13 year old girl.

And she was weeping. And I said, honey, what's wrong. And she said, when I was in the first grade, I lied to my school teacher.

And she said, it's really bothering me. I said, well, I want to tell you how to take care of it. I said, I'll tell you what you need to do.

You need to go to that teacher. You need to find her. You need to tell her what you've done and you need to ask her to forgive you.

Well, we prayed and send her out the door. The next day we were there in the motel laying in bed because we didn't want to put our feet on the floor and the phone rang and I'm glad that I have a 35 inch arm because I was able to reach the phone on the dresser way over here. And as I pulled the phone to me and, and on the other end was this little girl and she was so excited.

And she said, guess what? Well, I knew what had happened, but I said, what I wanted her to tell me. She said, I did it. I said, you did what? She said, I call my first grade school teacher and ask her to forgive me for lying.

I said, well, what did the teacher say? The teacher said that she was the first person that had ever apologized to her for anything that had happened in the classroom. I said, how do you feel? She said, I feel great. I said, you never have to worry about it again, because you've cleared it up and you put it right

with God and man.

I know a pastor that stood before his congregation and he asked his congregation to forgive him. He said, many of you have been in my office and seen my diploma from seminary. He said, I gave you the impression that I earned the degree.

He said, the truth is I didn't earn it. I cheated on the final exam. He said, I've sent the diploma back to seminary and asked their forgiveness.

And now I'm asking you to forgive me for giving you a false impression about myself. You said, did they get rid of him? No. You see, there's no such thing as a perfect pastor.

So the next best thing is a honest pastor. And I think they had more respect for him afterwards than they did before putting things right, where things have gone wrong. I said, a meeting where a fellow stood up one night, he was a Bible college guy and he leased an apartment.

And if you're a landlord and you see a U-Haul truck backed up to the apartment at two o'clock in the morning, you know, you got problems. Well, this guy had run out on a lease from the landlord here. He was a real testimony, right? As a Bible college student.

And he got into conviction in the meeting. He drove back to that town that day, found the landlord, apologized, asked forgiveness, paid him, paid him off, put it right. And came to church that night.

And he was absolutely thrilled. I was in a meeting in West Virginia and a lady came one morning, the secretary, she pulled out a piece of paper out of her sweater pocket. She had tears streaming down her face.

She said, Harold, I've got 17 people to put things right with. I've already got two taken care of only 15 more to go. She said, I'm on business for God.

Pray for me today, putting things right where things have gone wrong. Now I was in Newark Valley, New York. A four, a 15 year old young man stood one night and told the story.

His parents had been out of town. He was driving the family car without a driver's license. He had a wreck.

His sister had a license. So she slipped in behind the wheel and took the blame. Now the whole church was on the impression that, that the sister had caused the accident.

And this young man stood up before the congregation and he asked the church to forgive him for being a liar. And he'd already squared it with mom and dad. And I said to the pastor, I said, you take a 15 year old kid with that kind of character and that kind of courage, he's likely to amount to something for God.

I've got a friend that got saved. Let me just say what I mean by being saved is B is B being made radically different by the grace of God. That's what I mean by salvation.

I don't believe in salvation that leaves people in their sin. I don't believe in that. And the Bible doesn't either.

And brother, this guy got radically saved. Well, he was in a meeting there one night and his boss called him in for a year in interview and ask him what kind of a year in bonus he thought he ought to be getting.

And my friend said, well, I don't deserve any year in bonus.

He said, I've been stealing from you for five years. Well, the drug addict boss was curious as to what brought that on. So he got to give his testimony about how God had saved him.

And here's a guy that he could have gone to jail. He could have lost his job. He could have lost his reputation, but being right with God was more important to him than any earthly consideration.

I want to tell you, he didn't lose his job. He got a \$5,000 bonus that year. I figured the boss was thinking he's probably the only guy I've got.

That's honest. He's probably the only one that's not on the take, but he got his conscience. He got his conscience clear.

I was in Florida, not too long ago. And a fellow came up one night and told me that he had burned his house down to collect the insurance money. And he was under conviction.

And I said, well, sir, it's very simple. What you need to do. You need to go as far as you need to go to put things right where things have gone wrong.

Can you imagine that here's a guy burning down his own house to collect the insurance and then getting out of conviction. So you'd be better off to get under conviction before you do it. So you don't have to make restitution.

Amen. But he put things right where things had gone wrong. You know, when it comes to the matters of the conscience, you'll either act in obedience or you will walk in defeat.

And I want to talk to you tonight for a few moments on a very practical subject. One of the greatest lessons I learned as a teenager, and I'm still learning as a non teenager. All right.

Let's talk about this business of a clear conscience. Let's read the definition out loud together tonight. Shall we clear conscience, the ability to honestly say that there is no one on this earth that I have ever wronged, offended or hurt in any way and not gone back and attempted to make it right.

That's a mouthful. You know, when I first heard that definition, I thought, man, alive. If I have to go back and square it with everybody I've wronged.

I don't know if I have enough decades left to put everything right that I've already put wrong. But, you know, God narrowed that situation down to about five, six, seven key instances where I went back. The clear conscience is the ability to honestly say that there is no one on this earth that I have ever wronged, offended or hurt in any way and not gone back and attempted.

And that's the key word attempted to make it right. Now, notice, if you would, some of the consequences of not forgiving the consequences of not forgiving. First of all, physical destruction.

The Bible says a merry heart doeth good like a medicine, but a broken spirit dryeth the bones. God didn't make your human body or your human spirit to be a container for bitterness, resentment, animosity and unresolved conflict. I want to tell you that there are physical ramifications to spiritual sin.

We had a neurologist one time that used to prescribe our forgiveness book instead of dope. And he said to me, he said, most of the people that come to see me don't have physical problems. He said they have physical symptoms, but they have spiritual problems.

And he diagnosed after years and being a medical doctor that many, many physical symptoms come about because of non-forgiveness or bitterness. Notice another consequence of not forgiving emotional and emotional depression. Now, I believe that depression is God's searchlight for sin on occasion.

I know that there are many causes for depression. I understand that. But I want to tell you one of the chief causes, not the only cause, but one of the chief causes for depression is unresolved conflict and bitterness and an unclear conscience.

Notice another consequence of not forgiving a mental dungeon. The mind becomes short-circuited. It's not functioning as God intended.

And when a person has an unclear conscience, they tend to rehearse and rehash the same old guilt and the same old trash over and over and over and over again. Dear people, I want to tell you we need to learn to deal with things and then move on. And God's got a way to do that.

Well, another consequence of not forgiving is spiritual, spiritual defeat. Now notice if you would, the Bible teaches that if we cannot love our brother whom we have seen, there's no way that we can really be loving God whom we've not seen. And the way we relate to one another is really an indication of how we're really relating to God.

Well, it causes spiritual defeat. Notice number two, it causes a person to doubt their salvation. The scripture says, if you don't forgive men their trespasses, neither will the heavenly father forgive you.

I want to tell you that when you have unforgiveness in your heart, you have no witness of the spirit of God that you belong to him. And let me just say this. I believe the Bible is very, very clear that salvation, your, your, your assurance of salvation is not just determined by what you have done, but by the active witness of the spirit of God, bearing witness with our spirits that we are the children of God.

But when we're in disobedience, brother, the spirit of God is not bearing witness with our spirits and people begin to doubt whether they're even saved. Notice if you would, it puts a stumbling block before weaker Christians and the watching world. And Jesus said, it'd be better for you to have a millstone tied around your neck and cast to the bottom of the sea than to offend one of his little ones.

It's very serious. Another consequence of unforgiveness. Notice if you would, it puts a curse upon the family.

Deuteronomy said, the sins of the parents are passed on to the children, to the third and fourth generation of them that hate God. You know, most of us, we inherited a bunch of garbage from our ancestors. Wouldn't it be a blessing if we could put an end to that and hand our kids a clear slate instead of a lot of garbage they got to work through all my dear people are the consequences of not forgiving.

Notice some of the characteristics of a person with an unclear conscience, some of the characteristics of a person with an unclear conscience. Number one, nervousness. Jesus said, my peace, I leave with you my peace.

I give unto you not as the world. So give I unto you. But I want to tell you when our conscience has been violated and we're doing nothing to act in obedience, to put it right.

I want to tell you, we lose the peace of God, that gentle dove, the Holy spirit takes its flight as it were, and he's easily offended. And here we are, rather than experiencing the peace that passes all understanding, we have misery that passes all understanding, a characteristic of an unclear conscience. Notice if you would no power in witnessing, no power.

You know, when you talk to people on the outside, God's got to talk to them on the inside, or it falls to the ground. And that's why you ought to be praying every Sunday, when you come together, that there will be a demonstration of power and the Holy spirit, that the word of God would have free course that there wouldn't be any weights on the meeting. And that's why it's imperative in the house of God, for God's people to be clear, walking in the light as he is in the light so that God, God can manifest his power and brother, the loss can be brought in.

And I want to tell you, God needs to empower our witness, but he can't do it when our conscience consciences are violated. Notice number three, judgmental attitudes, judgmental attitudes. The Bible says, why do you judge another man for the things you you're guilty of yourself? Have you ever noticed the thing that bothers you about other people is typically something that's true about you? Have you ever noticed that? And I want to tell you people that go on a chronic witch hunt and spiritual Nazis and Gestapo agents who are all the time of finding fault and criticizing and belittling.

I want to tell you a nine times out of 10, the reason they're doing it is to compensate for their own guilt. And I want to tell you a critical spirit is often an indication of an unclear conscience. Notice if you would an inability to concentrate a person with an unclear conscience.

Now they tell us now, well, some people tell us now, well, you can't speak over 20 minutes because the people just can't hang with you. They have short attention spans and half the congregation has ADD adult discipline disorder. And, uh, and they just can't pay.

Well, they don't seem to have any, uh, attention deficit when it comes to Nintendo or Xbox or, uh, the ball game. Don't seem to have any attention deficit there. Amen.

But you said, well, with this inability to concentrate, you know, when your mind is preoccupied with guilt, brother, you're not thinking right. You're just not, you're just not seeing straight. You're just not with the program.

And I want to tell you a lot of times because of an unclear conscience. What about this small circle of friends? Well, you better not get too close to people because you might get found out. You know what they told us in a preacher board class back in school that they said, now you don't want to get too close to the people because of the people find out what you're really like.

They're going to lose respect for you. You know what I thought back then? Hogwash. You know what I think now? Hogwash.

That's a bunch of hogwash. I am not going to go around and pretend to be something that I'm not. And I refuse, and I understand that we have to be discretionary and all of that, but I refuse to put on a mask of pretense and just to just go around and fake everybody out and put on one of those, uh, possum, uh, Robert Shuler grins and just make out like, oh man, everything is wonderful.

You've got to be yourself, brother. But, but when you've got an unclear conscience, you are definitely afraid of found out. So the roof is on toward God and the walls are up.

And here we are in our prison, our fortress of self-imprisonment. What about this one? No joy. That's a terrible state to get to, isn't it? No joy.

You know, the fruit of the Holy spirit is love and joy. And brother, God wants us to have the joy of his salvation. But when our consciences are violated, we lose the joy of the Lord, depression and fatigue.

Now this is not an advertisement for barley green. All right. But, uh, why is it that I have the crown is strung out now? I know there are many factors, overextension, uh, poor diets, no exercise.

I mean, I mean, there are many factors here, but I want to tell you one reason. I think that, uh, there's such an epidemic of, uh, lethargy and, and downcastness and depression and fatigue is because of an unclear conscience. I want to tell you a merry heart does good, like a medicine.

And then when you're percolating on all eight in your soul, it has an effect upon your physical wellbeing and how you feel. Amen. Look at this one in self-condemnation.

Oh, self-condemnation. So here we are beating ourselves and taking a stick to ourselves and, and beating ourselves down. And, and brother, I want to tell you that listen, God doesn't condemn us.

And we couldn't condemn ourselves either. You really need to get that believer's resume thing, by the way, and find out all the good things God says about you, because some of you are still stuck on the wrong side of Calvary. Yeah.

You were a center, but brother, you're now a saint. And I want to tell you, you're either a saint or an eight. And I want to tell you when it comes to the scripture, man, you have passed from death unto life.

You are righteous in him. You're accepted in him. You are forgiven.

You're justified. You're sanctified brother. I'm telling you there's no limit to the good things God has to say about us.

But when we're having an unclear conscience, man, we are burdened down and here we are beating ourselves up. Well, what about this one inordinate fears? Hey, God's not giving us the spirit of fear, but of love and a power and of a sound mind. Hey, perfect love cast out fear.

You know, all this stuff about panic attacks. We had a, we took a trip to India and the girl was afraid to go because she said she had panic attacks and she thought she was going to have a panic attack on the plane. It took us 72 hours to get there.

I'll tell you what I've forgiven the tour agent that booked that trip, brother, but we went the wrong way. But, uh, you know, you know, we were delirious and we laughed so much. She didn't have a panic attack the whole time.

I mean, we laughed the whole time. It's probably because of fatigue, but, but I mean, what about all of this stuff? Now I know this is real. All right.

I talked to a fellow one day and he said, he said, I have a fear of heights. I said, yeah, me too. But he had an inordinate fear of heights.

He said, I'm afraid to go into the second story of the church building. There's something abnormal about that. There's something not right about this.

And some of these abnormal fears are because of an unclear conscience. What about this may be active at church, but neglect other things. I believe we ought to be active in the local church, but listen, that's not a compensation for our guilt, but an expression of our gratitude to God.

And I want to tell you, being active at church doesn't mean you're down there eight nights out of the week trying to compensate and letting your family go to pot. You understand, but you see, sometimes this is just a cover up for the real problem. What about this one? Always defensive a person with an unclear conscience.

The Bible says the way of a man is right in his own eyes, but the Lord trieth the hearts. Well, notice some excuses of Satan, not to clear the conscience excuses of Satan, not to clear the conscience. See if, uh, any of these ring a bell number one.

Well, it happened a long time ago. Well, it was before you were saved. Hey, what would happen? You down here, one of these shopping centers, uh, tomorrow, and, uh, you go in the store and come out and lo and behold, when you come out, you discover your car has been stolen.

Well, you file a report with the police and so on and so forth. And pastor Joe and brother Sam gets back in town and they go out soul winning Saturday morning. And when you know, they go to the car thieves house and lead the car thief to Christ.

Well, the car thing shows up at church on Sunday morning. He's the first one down the aisle and here you're coming down the aisle, man. You've got something to rejoice about.

Now we welcome this new convert into the family of God. And you say, Hey brother, let me walk you out to the parking lot. And as you're making your way out of the, out of the auditorium, and as you come closer toward the car that he's headed toward, things have a strange familiarity about them.

And lo and behold, you discover that's your car. And when you get to the car, you point this out to the new convert, the converted car thief. Uh, Hey brother, where'd you get my car? And he says, well, I stole that, but it was before I was saved.

And the pastor said, my sins are under the blood and what's gone is gone. And what's done is done. Let me ask you something.

You want your car back? Yes or no? Yeah. You want your car back. And friend, I want to tell you this whole idea, and I'm not for dredging up that past needlessly, but what I'm saying is, is when there's been obvious violations, brother, we need to go ahead and deal thoroughly with God to get a conscience vote of offense toward God and toward man.

What about this one right here? They moved away. Well, God's got to address for every person on planet earth, all 6 billion of them. I was in a meeting one time in Georgia and a fellow stood one night and gave this testimony.

He said that when he was a young man, he worked at a service station and he used to steal from his employer and the service station had closed. And he hadn't seen the employer in decades. And, and he didn't know where he was, but he vowed a vow to God the night before that if he ever saw the fellow that he worked for, that he would go and put it right.

He said today, when I got out of the car at the bank, guess who I saw who I've not seen in decades, the service station owner. And he said, immediately he went up to him and reintroduced himself, told him what he had done, asked for forgiveness, paid him back, put it right. The service station owner happened to be a believer.

He said they had a revival meeting right there in the parking lot. And he came to church that night. Absolutely thrilled.

They moved away. I was in Chicago one time preaching and a lady said, well, I used to work at a department store and I stole from the employer, but it's been closed for years. I have no idea where she's at.

I said, why don't you just take the equivalent of whatever it is you think you stole and put it in the offering plate and say something like this, Lord, if you ever bring this person back across my path, I promise you I'll go and I'll put it right. But in the meantime, I'm doing everything I know to do. They moved away.

Notice this one right here. Well, it was so small. Well, that sounds like something the devil would come up with, doesn't it? Well, your sins are not nearly as bad as the other man's.

Hey, we were one time coming back from California. My wife and I used to drive to California. We had a Volkswagen Rabbit diesel, 55 miles to a gallon.

We could go and come on coast to coast on \$20. And I don't even like to fly to California now, but we were coming home and my wife was expecting our first child and we were in Flagstaff, Arizona, and we're going to go to Grand Canyon. We'd always heard about the Grand Canyon.

You know, this is really great. So we got up the next day and we went up through the Sun Crater National Forest. Anybody ever been to the Sun Crater National Forest? All right.

It's not really a popular site here, but you verify what I say. We got into Sun Crater National Forest, which is just a bunch of volcanic lava rocks. And what they say was that millions and millions and billions and billions and billions of years ago, there was a tremendous volcanic eruption and it left all of these lava rocks.

And well, we got in the park and good night. It was acres and acres and acres of lava stones. So I pulled over on the side of the road, hopped out, left my pregnant wife sitting in our Volkswagen rabid diesel.

And I made my way down the hill, picked up a couple of these lava rocks, came back to the car, took the rocks, handed them to my wife. I said, honey, look at these rocks. And she said, what are you going to do with those rocks? I said, well, we're going to take them as souvenirs.

And if we ever have a mantle, we'll put them on the mantle as souvenirs. And she said, and a very self-righteous spirit. Didn't you see that sign? I said, what sign? Now, the truth is I saw the sign, but only read enough of the sign to know what the rest was going to say.

And since how I didn't want to hear what the rest of the sign had to say, I quit reading the sign. And I said, well, no, I didn't read any sign. And she said, well, the sign said, don't remove anything from the park.

I said, honey, come on, get real. Just a couple of couple of rocks. And with a very pharisaical spirit, she said, what do you think would happen if everybody came through, got a couple of rocks? I said, honey, take a look.

If everybody that came through here for the next 10 billion years, got two rocks, there'd still be plenty of rocks left. I said, give me the rocks and just give me the rocks. I took the rocks and shoved them up on the seat.

Well, it was a quiet ride to the grand Canyon. And I went for the radio and I, I couldn't listen to rock and roll, but I didn't want to find a Christian station either, because they might be talking about a clear conscience. So I, I was looking for easy listening.

Well, there is no easy listening, uh, uh, Flagstaff in those days. Well, I forgot about the rocks. And by the way, the grand Canyon just looked like a big pit.

I'm telling you, it didn't, it didn't, we were there 10 minutes and said, what is a big deal? And got in the car and went on home. Well, I got home and I was in a mission, miserable frame of mind. I don't know if you can relate to this.

I got home. I didn't want to see anybody. I didn't want to talk to anybody.

Don't hand me the phone. I was miserable. I couldn't sleep.

I mean, at night at 11, 12 o'clock, I was up, uh, with pepperoni Ritz crackers and Johnny Carson, a sure sign. I was backslidden, a sure sign. I was backslidden.

And, uh, then, um, you know what I do during the day? Now, these were the days young people, you got to understand. I'm not that old. All right.

But they had arcades, video arcades, and they had Pac-Man. Can you imagine, can you imagine a 28 year old fella going to a video arcade and blah, blah. And trying to catch that stupid cherry and all of that.

I mean, this is what I was doing. Miserable. And after about three days of this absolute misery, I said, okay, Lord, what is it? And you know, the first thing that popped in my mind, rocks.

Oh, man. So I went out and got the rocks. I didn't argue.

I went out and got the rocks, brought them in, boxed them up, Said I enrolled a letter to the Park ranger at Sun Crater National Forest. I said dear sir Recently my wife and I visited the park and I stole these rocks And the devil came along and said you are crazy man. Nobody does this if you send this letter they're gonna send a truck out and guys in white suits are gonna hop out and haul you off and do a Psychological study on you for the next 50 you are crazy and any all this kind of stuff I didn't pay any attention to all of that.

I just kept on writing. I said dear sir I I was I stole these rocks and I am now returning these rocks and I am asking you to forgive me for Stealing the rocks out of Sun Crater National Forest Well, I packaged that

thing up went down the post office and I'm telling you the truth I was on a terrible state of mind until I paid the clerk and when I paid the postage I want to tell you I didn't need pepperoni. I didn't need pac-man.

I didn't need Johnny Carson I could sing again and I was decent to be around and you know something friend. You say well that was so small I'd rather go too far that way than to become calloused and indifferent and begin to justify and rationalize sin It was so small if it's big enough to bother you it's big enough to act on what about this one? Well, I'm too sensitive Now that's highly unlikely in our culture. But even if you are God can moderate that problem What about this one? Well, nobody's perfect Well, you're not going to get an account for somebody else you're gonna give an account for you Listen some men's sins go before and some men's sins follow after I'd rather go ahead and get mine sent on up ahead of time And dealt with ahead of time hadn't you I don't want I listen there's gonna be tears at the judgment seat of Christ I think we really need to rethink the judgment seat of Christ Pastor Sam will be back and he can straighten out all the theological errors here But let me just say this that at the judgment seat of Christ It's not only going to be an award podium It will be a judgment seat and we're going to give an account of the things we've done in the body Whether they be good whether they be evil.

Give me a dispensationalist. Amen on that point right there Yes, sir That's why it's required of a steward that a man be found faithful brother and that's why it's up to us to walk in the light and keep things clear a Conscience vote of offense toward God and toward man. What about this one? It involves money Well God's not broke a Couple came down from Canada bought some photographic equipment Went back and didn't pay duty and got on a deep conviction.

They go to see the pastor They're both weeping profusely and the wife is crying out. Don't don't don't tell him don't say it and the Husband tells the pastor what they've done well, the pastor gets on the phone calls the border agent and said Have a couple here in my office that bought some stuff in the States They didn't pay duty on it. And what can we do? And they the agent said well It's a good thing you came to us instead of us coming to you Yeah, right like they would ever be able to come to them And he said well all you need to do is here's the amount of tax It would be just pay this and everything is fine Now all of that turmoil all of that grief all of that frustration all of that heartache and heart rending emotional bondage Because they were afraid it would involve money.

Well, what about this one? They won't understand Friend the issue is not whether they understand the issue is whether you obey And I want to tell you you'll be amazed how much people will understand. I mean you really will I remember my father bought a 1950 Chevrolet pickup brand-new \$1,300 got a heater heater on it for 50 more and he gave me the truck before he passed away But I backed that it's all it's been shed kept under a shed Protected from the weather all that time. Well one day I was out there backing that thing out of the old shed and Man, I ran over something big crunch.

I got out and lo and behold. It was my father's blue toolbox You know what 3,000 pounds does to a toolbox even one that was made 40 years ago You know what it does flat as a pancake man. I looked at that thing and I thought oh man So I got on the anvil I've never had a blacksmith lesson, but I got on the anvil and I beat that thing back into shape Everything looked good except for the paint that was knocked off I even got it the way the tray would go back and it would close I Set it in the back of the truck and I never breathed a word to dad I was in a meeting in Carolina a long time after that and I was gonna speak to the people and God spoke to me About being a liar to my father and a deceiver man.

I drove two hours found my dad. He didn't have a clue I recreated the whole story told him what had happened I said I came all the way just to ask you to forgive me for deceiving you now to him. It was a Molehill to me.

It was like a Mount Everest and I want to tell you I cleared it. He shook it off Don't worry about it. I forgive you.

No, it didn't mean anything to him. But brother. It meant something to me And I want to tell you you'll be amazed sometimes what people will understand.

They'll be shocked that your conscience you have a conscience They'll be shocked at that in the first place and then that you have a conscience that wants to be right They'll even be more shocked at that, but so don't let the devil trip you up But even if they don't understand that's not the issue. It's whether you obey Well, I'll do it later and somehow later never comes Notice some guidelines for solving conflicts. How do we put things right when things have gone wrong? Well, here's some practical things list those with whom you have conflict, you know If you have interpersonal relational problems, I'd encourage you to do this make a list with those you have Conflict number two list your offenses.

How have I hurt them start there? Don't start with them start with you. All right How have I hurt them list your offenses number three list their offenses? How have I been hurt and Then comes the matter of forgiveness and sometimes we need to approach others. What about this one make? restitution Now notice some guidelines for putting things right when things have gone wrong Number one the scope of your confession should be as large But only as large as the scope of your transgression The scope of your confession should be as large but only as large as the scope of your transgression if it's a personal matter deal with God If it's a private matter deal with God and the individuals involved if it's a public matter It calls for a public confession and a church context keep it within those guidelines.

You'll always come out, right? I'm not in favor of National Enquirer Jerry Springer Confessions of sin in the house of God. I know one church where they advertised Testimonies of a former prostitute and a former homosexual Now listen, hallelujah that former prostitutes and former homosexuals can come to the Lord. I'm all about that But listen, the house of God is not a three-ring circus It's not a shy side show and we're not have a bunch of three-headed calves and all kinds of bizarre things going on to glorify Their past life and I want to tell you it doesn't glorify God to just to just give a lot of Unnecessary details when it comes to sin and a context that has nothing to do with it The scope of your transgression will determine the scope of your confession notice number two avoid shameful details The Bible says it's a shame to even speak of those things that are done of them in secret it doesn't glorify God to give too much information and too many details when it comes to matters of immorality now How should I do it? How should I go about how should I seek to get my conscience clear? Well number one go to the one offended if your brother sins against you go to him and him alone And I'm talking about obvious obvious offenses if I offend my brother I'm to leave my gift and I am to go to him the the the main word here is go You go to the one offended don't wait for them to meet you halfway No, you go ahead and beg God all the way and you'd be the peacemaker.

You'd be the one to initiate Reconciliation and use very very clear very very clear wording notice. Notice. I like this I was wrong in and then name your offense.

I Was wrong in I am sorry. Will you forgive me? Now? Here's ten words for revival I was wrong. I am sorry.

Will you forgive me? Let's try it out loud one more time. We did it last time. All right, I was wrong.

I am sorry Will you forgive me Together the class once more I was wrong. I am sorry. Will you forgive me? Now I wonder how many of us tonight need to say those words to somebody else How many of us need to say those words to our spouse our children our parents our employer our workmates our pastor our staff You know, you know brethren the house of God We're a bunch of imperfect people.

We're on route to a perfect perfect situation but on route God's given us some guidelines to live by and we need to seek to maintain a Fellowship in the bond of peace and live peaceably with all men as much as possible I know some people you can't live at peace with because they won't let you but you can do your part and going the extra Mile, and yes the second mile and tonight perhaps You need to go to some people and you need to seek to get your conscience clear Paul said herein to exercise myself always to have had a conscience void of offense toward God and toward man You know, Jesus said if somebody offends you Or you go to them and dear people our sin has offended God Our sin is an offense to God and God has made a way for us to come to him Because he paid our sin debt in full on Calvary and I want to tell you the Bible is very very clear We're to be reconciled to God through the sacrifice of his Son. I Heard that in Kenya Africa the Maasai people a tribal people have a custom that if one man offends another man and wants to make It right he goes to him and he takes a goat to the offended party and when he gets there, he slits the throat of that goat and Hands it to the offended party and they have a saying in their culture that where the blood flows forgiveness comes Where the blood flows forgiveness comes and brother Isn't it wonderful that the blood of Jesus flowed on Calvary that forgiveness can come to whosoever will Will accept that free gift of eternal life Brother, if we've offended God we need to go to God and ask God to forgive us and we need to receive this sacrifice That he's made on our behalf and my dear people as God's people. We got to exercise ourselves We got to work at Maintaining a conscience vote of offense toward God through the blood and toward man through reconciliation and restitution Where possible and when needed and brethren, I want to tell you that's the way to live.

This is a fundamental foundational principle the brother we can't get to second base until we Touch first base on this point right here and tonight. I would encourage you are things clear in your heart. How many of us tonight? Need to go to God and ask forgiveness for our disobedience How many of us tonight need to go to somebody and say brother sister and listen, I am so sorry.

I was wrong Will you forgive me? How many of us tonight need to go to God and say God forgive me Lord for spurning your love and rejecting your son God I'm coming to receive the gift that your son has paid on my behalf a clear conscience the ability to honestly say There's no one on this earth that I've ever wronged offended or hurt in any way and not gone back and attempted to make it Right. I want to tell you It's a sweet thing when you can pillow your head at night Knowing all is clear Nothing between you and the Savior and as much as lies in your power. You've sought to put things, right? I want to tell you that is a blessed blessed position to be in and your sleep can be sweet a Clear conscience what a blessing I highly recommend it and I've been down the road long enough to know that when things go wrong By the grace of God we can seek to put them, right? Let us pray father, would you bless the people tonight would you encourage people tonight and father may people be helped Heads about eyes are closed two or three questions number one How many how many of us tonight need to go to somebody because God has impressed our hearts that things are not clear that we've offended others and our consciences are Offended and we need to go to somebody and Seek to be reconciled and seek to put things right where things have gone wrong How many tonight would say Harold God talk to my heart.

I need to go to mom and dad I need to go to my employer. I need to go to my pastor. I need to go to somebody I need to put something right.

Would you just lift your hand tonight all over the building God talk to your heart? Many hands God bless every one of you. I Wonder how many of you tonight need to go to somebody? That's here. I would never recommend you publicly embarrass somebody else, but I want to tell you If there's if you've obviously offended somebody and you need to put something right it might not be a good bad idea for you to just get up out of your seat and go to those persons and just get in a corner or a Sunday school room and Just to clear things out and to ask forgiveness.

I'd encourage you to do that. I Wonder if there's somebody in the building tonight that said Harold. I need to go to God Man, you're talking about getting right with people.

I need to get right with God and Harold I need to be reconciled to the Lord, you know, you might be here tonight and you're not a Christian You've never come to the Lord in saving faith, but God's been dealing with you and talking with you tonight We want to invite you to respond and come and take pastor Herman's hand and say preacher. Would you help me? And I'll tell you he'll have somebody take a Bible and point you to the Savior You can find God's forgiveness by receiving God's Son. I encourage you to do that tonight

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