

Power of a Pure Conscience

by Tom Allen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of maintaining a clear conscience for spiritual growth and healthy relationships with God and others.

Duration: 42:32

Scripture: Matthew 28:19, Acts 23:1, 1 Peter 3:16

Topics: "Pure Conscience"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher uses the analogy of baby robins in a nest to illustrate how some Christians are constantly relying on others for spiritual nourishment instead of taking their own leap of faith. The preacher emphasizes the importance of having a clear conscience and poses three questions to help the audience evaluate their own spiritual state. The sermon explores the results of having a clear conscience, including peace, boldness, and joy. The preacher encourages the audience to examine their lives and address any areas where they may have unresolved issues that are hindering their clear conscience.

Transcript

Acts chapter 23 and verse 1. And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day. Now stop with me just a moment. Think who said that verse.

Paul, who used to be called Saul, the one who persecuted, tormented, had slain Christians. This is the man who now stands there before all of his brothers in the Lord and says, I have lived in all good conscience. Think of the price that Paul must have paid himself to be able to say such a magnificent statement.

I trust that's your testimony and mine this morning as we go into this message. Let's pray together. Dear Lord Jesus, we are grateful for your word that makes it very plain this morning.

Thank you that you don't leave us out in the dark. We know what we're supposed to do. We know what you expect of us.

Lord, we know that obtaining a clear conscience is not good works that will bring salvation to us. But we know that obtaining and working towards a clear conscience is simply a result of so great a salvation. Teach us this morning that we should want to be right with every known person and especially with you.

We should want that. That should be a desire following our great salvation that you provided. Pray that you just increase the hunger of your people, the hunger of this preacher, to be totally right with God and man.

May we live, as Paul said, with a good conscience. We pray these things in the name of Jesus Christ and for his own dear sake. Amen.

I have a little different way this morning of approaching the introduction. I want you to take out a little piece of paper. We're going to take a little quiz.

All of your answers will be yes or no. I don't want any maybes. These are yes and no.

If you don't want your wife or husband to see you, scoot down or cover up, whatever you'd like to do. If you can't find any paper, tear the back page out of that hymnal. And, uh, no.

I would like you to see this, though, in writing, your answers to the following questions. Yes or no. Students have been out of school for a while, so you're ready for another little quiz.

But this, of course, will be a spiritual one. Now, be honest before God, as you know you should answer before Him to these questions. Question number one.

Do you sense a powerlessness in your witnessing? Do you sense a powerlessness in your witnessing? You go to witness for Christ, and it just isn't there. The boldness, the approach, you just feel weak before people who are unsaved. Yes or no.

Question number two. Are you going through the role of religion, but you find often you don't have your heart in it? That is, you try to have your devotions, you try to come to church regularly, you try to witness to one person a day, you try to pray, you do these things, but so many times your heart is not in it. Is that true of your life? Yes or no.

Question number three. Are you prone to nervousness and worry? You see, not until I took this quiz. Well, uh, prone to nervousness or worry.

Yes or no. Number four. Are you hampered by anxiety and frustration? Just a lot of things that don't seem to be going your way, and you're anxious about it, frustrated.

Number five. Do you have problems with fear? Fear of losing money, fear of losing your job. Yes or no.

Number six. Do you have difficulty concentrating? Don't ask me to repeat the question or you have that problem. Do you have difficulty concentrating? That is, sitting yourself down to do something and then doing it.

Getting right into it. And the last question in our little quiz this morning, and be honest about this, I know what a Christian's answer ought to be, but whether that's true in your life or not, is your life characterized by sadness? I know Christians are supposed to be happy people, but you have to answer to God. Is your life characterized by sadness? Now, if you've answered yes to any of the seven questions in this quiz this morning, there is a good chance, it's not absolutely positive, but I say a good chance that there is something you have not dealt with in this area of a clear conscience.

You're going to see that unfold throughout the message this morning. Something you have not dealt with if you've answered yes to any of the seven questions I've just presented. I want to define a clear conscience, and then we're going to answer three questions to make an outline for our message this morning, if you are taking notes.

The first question we're going to answer will be, how important is a clear conscience? The second question, what are the results of a clear conscience? And the third question, why don't most Christians have one? We're going to look at those three questions in getting to this matter of the power of a clear conscience. Now, let's define a clear conscience. I think it is in the Bill Gothard ministries that we've heard this definition, and I think it's very good.

A brother says, a clear conscience is being able to line up everyone you have ever known in one big line, whether they're living or dead, line them all up, all people you have ever known in your lifetime, look them right in the eye, and say, brother or sister, there is nothing that I am holding against you that I have not previously made right with you. Again I say, it's lining up everyone you have ever known in a big long line, looking them right in the eye one at a time, and saying, brother or sister, there is nothing that I am holding against you that I have not previously made right with you. That's what it means to have a clear conscience.

Some of you may not be able to do that with your wife or your husband this morning, but this is what it means. So let's look at the first question then. Just how important is a clear conscience? We're going to look at many scriptures, so turn with me.

1 Timothy chapter 1 and verse 5. I want everyone to turn to these passages with me this morning. You remember 70% more of what you both see and hear as opposed to just what you hear. So see it and hear it this morning.

1 Timothy 1.5, just how important is a clear conscience? Paul says, Now the end of the commandment is love out of a pure heart and of a good conscience and of faith unfeigned, or true faith, real Christianity. Paul tells us here very plainly that you and I will not be able to love apart from these three ingredients. He starts out by saying pure heart.

I believe that speaks of a clear conscience with God, a pure heart in this direction. And then he says a good conscience, and that must speak of our relationship with men on the earthly level. We've got to have that to be able to love.

And thirdly, he says we've got to be truly Christian. Did you know that only true Christians can love? Did you ever stop to think about that? The Bible says God is love, and a person who does not have God dwelling in them cannot love. Only true Christians can love in a genuine way.

So, you see how important is a clear conscience this morning, and the scriptural answer is, it's so important that if you don't have one, you can't love people. You can't love lost people. You can't love your wife, your husband, your children, your parents.

You can't love. Let's look at the second reason, the second answer to this question. How important is a clear conscience? Back in Matthew 5. Matthew, the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 5, verses 23 and 24.

Matthew, chapter 5, verses 23 and 24. Therefore, if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has ought against you, leave there your gift before the altar, go your way, first be

reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Every time we find this word first in the New Testament, it speaks of priority.

And Christ here is speaking to us of a priority. Jesus says, do you want to know what I think is the number one important thing in your Christian walk? It's not the money you put in the offering plate. It's not your offerings of time for service.

Jesus says, I don't want your money, if it's apart from, if it's exclusive of, a clear conscience with that brother or sister that you've offended, or that has offended you. Now note in our passage here, that Jesus says, if you remember that your brother has ought against you. So often we think, and rightfully so, that it's when we offend a brother, we're to go back and ask forgiveness.

That's indeed true, and that's made very clear in another passage. But here Jesus says, if you know that your brother has ought against you, it's still your responsibility, and my responsibility, to go to that person, and say, things are right between us, let's get it straight, what's wrong? That's our responsibility as Christians. This is a very overlooked truth in the Word of God, that it's our responsibility, whether we were the one who offended, or we were the one who did the offending.

So you see how important is a clear conscience? Well, Jesus doesn't want your money, you can't buy him off. A lot of people, you know, commit sin all week, and then come to church, and throw a few extra dollars in the offering, to sort of soothe their conscience, and Jesus says, I don't care about it. That money doesn't count, if you don't have a clear conscience, to go with that money.

Your service, your time for me in service, doesn't count, if you're not right with those people that you're serving. Now the third answer is in Matthew 6, just turn the page. How important is a clear conscience? We can't love without it, our gifts are unaccepted apart from it.

Now Matthew 6, 14 and 15, and I must confess to this audience this morning, these are two verses I don't like. Do you have any verses like that? These are two I just don't like. They hit hard.

For if you forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you. But, if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. These are hard sayings.

How important is it to you this morning, to have God Almighty forgive you of your sins? That's on the top of the list for me. How about you? I want to be forgiven by God. But if that's as important to us as we really believe it is this morning, are you willing to be forgiving? Jesus says if you hold one bitter, unforgiving attitude towards other people, your Father can't forgive you.

How many people are just wrapped up in bitterness and unforgiving attitudes? Some that go back to 1972, when someone came to you and said, Brother, Sister, forgive me. And you said inside yourself, I can't, it's impossible. And in the flesh you were right.

You didn't trust the Spirit of God. And to this day, nine years later, you may still be holding bitterness and an unforgiving spirit. The Word of God has strict, strict words, hard sayings for you.

That is that God will not be able to forgive you in that great day. That's how important it is to have a clear conscience. Matthew 18.6 is the next answer.

Matthew 18.6. You say, how important is it to have a clear conscience? Matthew 18.6. Jesus often used exaggeration to get his point across. And here is a very clear use of that. This really hits home.

There's no mistake about what Christ is trying to get across. Matthew 18.6. Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea. That doesn't sound too kind either, does it? But this is the Word of our Savior.

He says, don't you offend even one. Make sure your conscience is clear with everyone. Now don't over-sentimentalize this passage and think that Jesus is just talking here about mean old men who kick little three-year-old children around.

That's not the point here. Jesus is expanding the meaning of this. And to be sure it means all the children of God, all of the family of God.

Jesus says, don't offend one of them. Or you ought to just have a big rock tied around your neck and dive off a bridge somewhere and drown yourself. Do you see how important, do you see the intensity of this subject in the thinking of Christ here? Over and over again He pleads with us, make sure you're right with everyone.

Have a clear conscience. The last answer to our first question, James 5.16. Heard an evangelist on TV refer to James 5.16 without referring to the very first sentence which says, confess your sin one to another. He started right in there where it says, pray for one another that you may be healed.

The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. That's got to be one of the worst forms of blasphemy against the Word of God to leave out this crucial, crucial word. Confess your sins one to another.

Reads false in some of your translation, but the Greek word here is very clearly sins. And pray for one another that you may be healed because it's the effectual prayer of a righteous man that availeth much or accomplishes much. See, how important is a clear conscience? Well, Psalm 66.18 puts it in another way, but it's all the same.

If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me. That's how important it is to have a clear conscience, friends. Apart from one, our prayers don't go any further than the ceiling to which we're yelling.

God can't hear your prayers this morning if there's sin, known sin, between you and another person, regardless of who started the conflict. The scope of confession of sin must always equal the scope of transgression. You say, Tom, what should I do if I'm going to confess my sin one to another as the Scripture tells me here? Well, don't go to somebody and say, well, forgive me for my 50%.

Isn't that a cleverly devised way to get out of things? I've done that. What you do, you see, is you heap a burden on the other person. You play Holy Spirit in their life.

You say, now, come on, you cough up your half of this deal. I wasn't alone. But that's not the Scriptural way.

The Bible says, I'm to go and get right for Tom. You're to go and get right for yourself and leave them alone. Leave them and God to their part of the deal, whatever it may have been.

Go to a person saying, I have sinned against God and you. Forgive me. Don't just say, I'm sorry.

The Bible doesn't tell us to tell people we're sorry. It says to seek forgiveness. Say, I've sinned against God and you.

Please forgive me. Now, there are three kinds of sin outlined in a wonderful little tract put out by the Canadian Revival Fellowship, Confession, Restitution, and Forgiveness. Three kinds of sin, personal, public, and private.

Some of this will be reviewed for some of you, but others, I think this will be new, and so I want to give it to you. Now, there are such things as private sins and that's sin of the thought life. We don't go confessing our thought life to other people.

Only when those thoughts have been translated into action do they become personal sins and then need to be dealt with on a personal, one-to-one basis. We don't stand up in front of a crowd and say, I want Brother Bill over here and Sister Sue over here to forgive me. That's not scriptural.

If it's between us and that person, we go to your brother, says the scripture, in a personal way, and deal with it. But so oftentimes, these are private sins. Let me give you an illustration.

In many camps that I've spoken in, at the end of the week, a young person will come up and their head's kind of hanging down, you know. You say, Tom. I say, what? You say, I want you to forgive me because I've hated your guts all week.

I have a hard time with that. I don't mind being hated, at least when it's for Christ's sake and for what I've spoken about. But I didn't know anything about it.

I didn't even meet them all week. You know, they're the kind of young person that sat at the back of the camp tent or wherever we were meeting and tore off after every sermon. I never saw them, never met them.

And they come up and say, forgive me, I've hated you all week. That means nothing to me. Their hatred should have been dealt with God.

It was a private sin between them and God. And if they gossiped about me and said, boy, I sure hate that Tom, hate what he says, they should go to the person they gossiped with and ask their forgiveness for gossiping, for the bad example that gossip sets. It's a private sin.

But then there are those personal sins. Many of us had to deal with these during the great revival in 1972. And that's sin between me and one other person.

And I go to that person, one-on-one in private, and say, brother, sister, I want to get right. Here's the thing. Then thirdly, there's public sin.

That sin that's committed before a whole group. I can remember several years ago, I used to play football with some of the fellows from the church. Terrible temper that God had to deal with in my life.

I lost it over there in South Park and really got mad. I was kicking a few people. God really had to speak to me about that.

And because it was a public sin, it had to be confessed publicly. And I got that group back together again and asked them as a group to forgive me. There are a lot of sins that are public that we don't deal with in the way they ought to be dealt with.

Did you know that hypocrisy is a public sin? If you're playing a game by coming here on Sunday and living something else on Monday through Saturday, going against the very things that you would say amen to here in this service, do you know that ought to be confessed publicly before this whole audience? Because your life, your hypocrisy, is in some insidious way going to affect this entire body. We often think of body life in the positive way and how we contribute to one another. But friends, we can also be detrimental to the body when we're living hypocrisy and lives that are full of sin and yet putting it on here like we're all right with God.

Now, that needs to be confessed publicly. It's a public sin. Some of you lost your temper at your job and I want you to know that God will never be able to use you, you'll never have power in witnessing to those people where you were until you get them together as a group and confess that public sin publicly.

You affected the whole group. Do you see it? So deal with each of these kinds of sins in their respective manner. Personal sins, personally.

Private sins, privately. Public sins, publicly. But deal with them.

That's the issue. So we see how important it is to have a clear conscience. Now, let's answer our second question and that is what are the results of one? See, Tom, if I really work at this now and I go home and write out a list of people that I need to get straight with and I really get serious about this, what's going to happen in my life? I want to show you some powerful, positive things that are going to happen.

Let's turn first to Hebrews 5. That's right back from James. Just turn backwards a few pages. Hebrews 5, 13 and 14.

Oh, here's the power of a pure conscience. Hebrews 5, 13 and 14. For everyone that uses milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness, for he is a baby.

But strong meat belongs to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. Now, answer this question out loud, if you will, please. What part of our makeup do we discern good and evil? What do we call that? Our conscience.

That's right. Someone said it. Our conscience.

Now, notice what the writer of the Hebrews is saying here. A mark of spiritual maturity is a Christian, a person, who knows how to use their conscience. You see that there? Now, notice what the writer of the Hebrews is saying here.

A mark of spiritual maturity is a Christian, a person, who knows how to use their conscience. You see that there in verse 14? And a mark of spiritual immaturity is that person who resists this, who pays no attention to what God is trying to say to them, the people they need to get right with. They're going to be a spiritual baby.

Now, you've heard this illustration over and over. You know how cute it is to hear a one or two-year-old child say, Mama, Dada. But when that child is 20 years older and they're 21 or 22, saying Mama and Dada is not cute any longer, it's a tragedy.

And this is what's happening. So many Christian people, they never grow up spiritual babies. Some of you know the Lord as long as I've been alive and some of you longer.

But you've not grown up spiritually. Why? Because you resisted dealing with your conscience. You resisted going back to people that you have offended and hurt and wronged.

And you'll never grow up, says Paul. You'll never be able to take the meat of the Word until you deal with your conscience and learn to discern good and evil. So you're going to grow.

What will happen, you say? Tell me, what are the results of a clear conscience? You'll grow. You'll become spiritually mature. Look at the second great result, Acts 24, 16.

Remember this famous verse? This is probably the most famous verse in the subject of a clear conscience. Acts 24, 16. You say, what are the results of a clear conscience this morning? Here's another beauty.

As I go through these, it gives me a desire all over again, friends, to check my heart out, to make sure that I'm right with God and every person. This is Acts 24, 16. And herein do I exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offense or clear of offense towards God and towards man.

The horizontal, the vertical, Paul says, I want it both ways. I want to be clear. Now, I want to key in on the word exercise here.

Herein do I exercise. Now, what happens when you don't exercise? What happens when I don't exercise? What happens when anybody does? We get out of shape. You walk upstairs.

You just don't have it. You're out of shape when you don't exercise. Now, this is what's happening on a large scale in so many Christians' lives.

They're out of shape spiritually. Pardon my grammar, but we have a lot of fat, spiritual slobs in the church of Jesus Christ today. I meet them everywhere I go.

I'm not talking about physical overweight. I'm talking about spiritual overweight. People who have never learned to exercise and work off the spiritual food they receive on Sundays and Wednesdays if they're here.

Paul Valentine draws the picture of the church, and he says there's like a group of little baby robins up in the nest, and they're all going, come on, give me some more. Give me another sermon, pastor. And there are the mother robins flying over, dropping worms in, and these little baby birds are getting fatter and fatter, and they're crowding each other out of the nest.

It's a humorous picture, but it's also sad. They never get out on the limb and take a leap of faith and go flying out for themselves, go witnessing, go winning souls for themselves. They like to sit here in church and just soak it all in and get spiritually fat and let others do the exercising and the work.

Are you in shape for God this morning? Paul says, do you want to know how I take a run around the block spiritually? Do you want to know how I keep healthy for God? I'll tell you how. I make sure I've got a clear conscience with everybody. This is spiritual exercise, friends.

Some of us need to jog a mile. We need to get out to that friend around the corner there that we've offended and get it right with him. We need to get back to the government where we've done some shady IRS dealings and get back and say, I'm wrong.

I've got to pay for my sin. You'll become spiritual healthy. Paul says, herein do I exercise myself.

This is how I keep in shape for God so I can be used of God. So, spiritual maturity, spiritual health. Look at the third one, 2 Corinthians 1.12. You see, what are the results of a clear conscience? 2 Corinthians 1.12. You get kind of tired of this word conscience when you really take a study of it and find all the verses in which it appears.

Seems that God's trying to say something, doesn't it? 2 Corinthians 1.12. For our rejoicing is this, the feeling that we got when we heard that group sing. Oh, pardon me. For our rejoicing is this, that everything is going right and I have no trial.

Oh, let's re-read. Hold it, here we go. That's the reversed vision.

Let's get back to the revised version. Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience. Paul says, do you want to know why I'm so happy? Do you want to know why I feel praise in my heart for God? He says, I'll tell you.

I put my conscience up on the witness stand and you know something? It testified a good testimony about me. It's clear. I have a good conscience.

Does your conscience testify good things about you this morning in this audience? You know, a lot of our testimonies we hear these days, somebody will stand up and say, I just want to thank the Lord for the joy that He brings to my life when I think about Him. Christian life is so thrilling. I wonder why nobody ever comes to meetings when we invite them.

Why nobody ever seems to be touched by our lives. What happened to that zip, that joy of the Lord that just takes over a person? I'll tell you what happened. It got lost and we quit dealing with our conscience and quit saying, oh God, I want to be right with every known person on earth.

It just drains the joy, sucks every last minute of it out of our lives. Paul says, how rejoicing is this? A testimony of a good conscience. Do you have that joy this morning? What if I'd ask four of our men in the church here, some of the bigger and stronger ones, to help carry a baby elephant around, right around the church here.

Now, this is a wild illustration, but it will get across the point if you'll listen. And the elephant now is coming. We got this little baby elephant here and I say, now men, I want you one on each leg and I'm going to sort of coach you here and I'll say lift, but don't just carry this elephant.

I want you to smile while you carry it. Okay? Here we go now. And they all lift.

They just can't quite get that smile out, can they? Why? You can't carry an elephant and smile, friends. There are people in this audience this morning that have an elephantitis conscience and it's weighing

down on you. You've got sin that you haven't dealt with in your past.

Parents that you're bitter against. Teachers that you've cheated on exams with. And you expect God to give you the joy of the Lord.

Listen, you've got an elephant on top of you and you better get it off. You'll never smile for Christ in a genuine way until you do. So this is a result of a clear conscience.

It's rejoicing. Rejoicing in the Lord. The joy of the Lord renewed.

Look at 1 Timothy 1 now. 1 Timothy 1, 18 and 19. See, Tom, what are the results of a clear conscience so far? We've seen spiritual health, spiritual maturity, spiritual joy.

Now look at 1 Timothy 1, 18 and 19. This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience, which some, having put away concerning the faith, have made shipwreck. Notice the context here.

Paul's talking about spiritual warfare. You see, Tom, what will a clear conscience do for me? And I tell you this morning, dear friends, a clear conscience will give you power for spiritual warfare against the world, the flesh, and the devil. That's what it will give you.

That is the result of a clear conscience. The ability to fight off all the powers of the enemy. Do you have that power this morning? You see, Tom, you're crazy if you think I'm going back and getting things straight with my parents.

You see, Tom, I'm not going back to the government and pay them back. They've ripped me off enough in taxes and this and that. I'm not... You can say that this morning.

And Paul says of you, your life will be shipwrecked. You can do that if you please. You have a free will.

But your life, your Christian example, will be shipwrecked. How many Christians are like that today? Shipwrecked, all docked up for God, God can't be used. So full of holes where sin, undealt with, has crept in.

1 Peter 3. If you turn there please. 1 Peter 3. Verses 15 and 16. Here's another powerful, positive, practical result of a clear conscience.

1 Peter 3.15. Now get the context of witnessing in verse 15 here. Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear. Having a good conscience.

Getting a little weary of seeing that. Having a good conscience. That whereas they speak evil of you as of evildoers, they may be ashamed to falsely accuse your good life in Christ.

You say, Tom, what will be the result of a clear conscience? The Word of God says this morning, if you have a clear conscience, you have power to witness. You have authority from God to touch souls. That was the first question in our quiz.

Do you sense a powerlessness in your witnessing? How many Christians are trying to witness to a boss that they're bitter against? To a boss who they've talked behind his back? Some of you ladies are trying to witness to neighbor ladies. In some sly, some subtle, or some very known way, you've offended them. You'll never get through to them.

Why? Because as verse 16 here says, they're going to accuse your life in Christ. But Peter says if we have a clear conscience, it's a false accusation. They can't hold water.

I think I've told my testimony of the revival in 1972 here before. There were certain people that I was working with that I just couldn't get along with. A certain job that I held here in Mansfield.

God so spoke to my heart during that revival, Tom, get right, get right, get right. I had to get right. I had to go back.

I had to ask forgiveness. Two years later, this person, others involved were gloriously converted. How I thank God for that.

What an illustration of this truth. You see, as I got my conscience clear with them, then I had every right. I had the freedom to share Christ.

The power of the gospel could flow through me because they had nothing they could point out in my life and say, this is wrong in your life. You're a hypocrite. As long as people do that, you'll never have power with God or with men.

Do you have power with witnessing? The last thing I want to talk about this morning, the last result, is in Psalm 38. Will you turn there? Psalm 38. So far we've seen we can have spiritual health, spiritual maturity, spiritual joy, spiritual power for warfare, spiritual power for witnessing.

And now, here's the sixth positive, powerful result of a clear conscience. Psalm 38. I want to read this the way I think David wrote it.

O Lord, rebuke me not in thy wrath, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure. Your arrows stick fast in me, and your hand presses me sore. There's no soundness in my flesh, for that could be translated, no health in my body.

Because of your anger, neither is there any rest in my bones, because of my sin. David has arthritis, no rest in his bones. My iniquities are gone over my head, as a heavy burden, they're too heavy for me.

My wounds stink, they're corrupt because of my foolishness. I'm troubled, I'm bowed down, grey-legged, mourning all the day long. Don't pick up Psalm 38 if you want a blessing.

Doesn't bless me a bit. Now look at verse 17. Why was David so down? Why was his physical health at such a low place in this time of his life? Verse 17 For I'm ready to halt.

My sorrows continue before me. I will declare my iniquity. I will be sorry for my sin.

David says, Oh God, I see it now. My physical problem is really spiritual. I have sin that I haven't dealt with.

Oh friends, how many times there are in our lives that our physical problem is really, goes back to and relates very, very clearly to spiritual things. Now I'm not one of these that stand up before you this morning and say, all colds, all sicknesses, chastisement of God, or the devil made you do it, or the devil, there's demons in you, you gotta cast the demon out so you get rid of your cold. That's not scriptural.

But I believe in many, many cases, more than we're willing to admit, our physical sickness is brought on because of sin. Doctors say 70% of the patients in hospitals shouldn't be there. Some of them, it's just psychosomatic.

They just need the doctor to give them a few sugar pills, and just because the doctor gave them, they become better. Nothing wrong with them in the beginning. But I believe for others, they are truly sick, but they still shouldn't be in the hospital because they wouldn't have gotten into sin, if they wouldn't have fallen away from God.

They could be healed. They could be well. So good physical health, praise the Lord, as a result of a clear conscience.

An evangelist friend of mine told me this story about a woman. Came to him and said, I want to give you \$350 a month to your ministry. Whoo! He backed up and he said, Why? What's with you? She said, Three nights ago, you spoke on a clear conscience.

And, I've been dealing with these issues in my life. I've been going back and getting right with people. And she says, For the first time in my life, I'm free in my mind.

She said, I've been going to a psychologist for the past year. And every month, that's his bill, \$350. She says, I don't need that anymore.

I'm free. For the first time in my life, my mind is set free because I dealt with sin. And I want to give the \$350 a month to your ministry.

What a story that is, and how many more God wants to set free in that way. Remember what Paul said in 1 Corinthians 11? Those carnal Corinthians were coming to communion services with sin in their lives. They weren't right with God.

He says they were eating and drinking unworthily. And what did he finish after saying that? He said, For this cause, many of you are weak, many of you are sickly, and some even sleep. You've died.

See how clear that is in the scripture? You say, Tom, what's the result of a clear conscience? Good physical health. Some of you young people are here this morning. You're thinking to yourself, I'm young, full of vigor.

I don't need anything new or fresh from God. I don't want you to know if you're playing with sin right now as a teenager, not willing to deal with it, not willing to get your conscience clear before God and man is going to catch up with you physically. There are adults for whom it has here this morning.

Good physical health is the promise of God if we'll keep our life clean and pure from sin. The Indians had an interesting court system. The tribe leader used to take a piece of metal and a pair of tongs and hold it into the fire until it was red hot.

Then he'd gather all the Indians around in a circle and to find the guilty party when some sin or crime was committed, this Indian chief would take that red hot piece of metal and touch it to the tongues of all the Indians. They all would just stick their tongue out as he went around the circle. The first one burnt was the guilty party.

So how did that know? You see, the more guilty we are, the faster our heart would beat and that would take away the protective saliva from the mouth. It would be all dried up and they would get burnt first. Pretty clever, isn't it? The relationship between guilt and the physical condition.

Do you want good physical health? Do you want spiritual maturity? Spiritual health? Spiritual joy? Spiritual power for witnessing? Spiritual power for warfare? It's all yours when you have a clear conscience. The last question we're going to answer, we're going to be through on time this morning. Why don't most Christians have one? I want to give you the seven excuses that we use and I have to laugh when I give them to myself because I see how very much they relate to me and I've used every one of these at one time or another.

I think they're very human, human traits. Number one, it was a long time ago. I mean, you don't know how long ago it was.

Let me ask you this question about that excuse. Why do you still remember it? God wants you to deal with it, friends. I don't care how long ago it was.

God spoke to me back in the Revival about something that had happened ten years previous. When I was seven years old, I had to deal with that issue. Number two, they moved.

They don't live here anymore. Don't know where they went. Did you ever hear of directory assistance? We're living in a computerized day where you can find about anybody you need to find.

You see, tell one of my try and try and try and I just can't get through. I can't find the address. They're in a new place where they're living to get right with them.

Well then, praise God, it'll be like Abraham in the Old Testament. God will count it to you for righteousness. But I believe He expects us to make the attempt, my friends.

Make the attempt. Be diligent in your effort to find anyone and everyone that you've sinned against. Of course, in with that excuse is the one they've died.

Find the nearest relative that's living and tell them the story. In the rare case where there wouldn't be any relatives, make your confession to God and it'll be as counted to you for righteousness. Number three, it was just a little sin.

Just a teensy, teensy little sin. I mean, you know how little it was. You know, if I know the devil and I'm getting to know him better all the time, he would like to try to get us to commit a sin so small we don't think it needs to be confessed and yet big enough that we can't really forget it and then just eat us alive with it the rest of our lives.

Doesn't that sound like the devil? Sin so small we don't think it needs to be confessed and yet big enough we can't really forget it and then just eat us alive with it the rest of our lives. Isn't that the devil? Certainly it is. Is there really any small sin? I say there's not.

When we look at Calvary's cross and see Jesus Christ, God of very God, dying there in our stead, taking hell on himself, I dare say, friends, the sin that nailed him to that cross is not small. Number four, it'll cost me money. If I really get right with you, it'll cost me money.

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