

Keeping a Good Conscience

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen emphasizes the importance of keeping a good conscience, maintaining a blameless conscience, and speaking with gentleness and reverence.

Duration: 49:13

Scripture: Psalm 1:2, Jeremiah 15:19, 1 Timothy 1:19, 2 Timothy 4:2, 1 Peter 3:15-16, Revelation 3:11

Topics: "Conscience"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of keeping a sensitive conscience and living a life that honors Christ. He encourages believers to always be ready to defend their faith with gentleness and reverence. The speaker acknowledges his own failures and emphasizes the need for repentance and mourning over sin. He also highlights the importance of faithfulness in all areas of life, including words, money, and relationships. The sermon concludes with a reminder to hold fast to what one has and to strive for perfection in Christlikeness.

Transcript

First of all, I must say what a tremendous joy it has been for me to be here these days, to meet with you dear brothers and sisters, to share the word of God with you, and I trust that the effects of this will be eternal, and I have got to know some of you. I hope I can know more of you in the days to come. We are, we have different ministries, work more efficiently, not because we are different or separate or doing different jobs, but to do it more efficiently he breaks us up into smaller teams.

And also, not everybody fulfils the same task, and I have longed for many years to see in India, people with different ministries, different emphases, learning to appreciate one another, and to value one another, and work together, so that the church can be built, and no one man is exalted, except Jesus alone. So I hope that we shall see such a day in India. Today there is so much of competition and strife, and one group calling the other group names, and servants of God tearing each other down.

I don't want to have any part in all this. I have my convictions, as I said, in these days I cannot work with everybody, but if I cannot work with everybody, it is where the principles of scripture are compromised, not otherwise. Otherwise I am very happy to work with people who are totally different from me, with a totally different ministry, provided we do not compromise the principles of scripture.

That is more important than any work we can do. Any work that we do where the principles of scripture are compromised, will not be an eternal work, and that's why I don't want to engage in it. I want in this short life God has given me to do a work that will last forever, and if people want to do a work which is only temporary, I say, well, I'm sorry, I can't cooperate with that.

If you feel that's the way you should do it, go ahead and do it, I will not judge you, but I don't see eye to eye with you there, and I can't work with you. We must have a large heart to all of God's people, and the only place where we say, sorry, I can't do it, is where our conscience will not permit us. I want to say a little bit this morning about our conscience.

One of the great secrets of the Apostle Paul's tremendous life and ministry is found in this statement in Acts of the Apostles, chapter 24, and verse 16. See, just as I have spent my life studying the life of Jesus, I have also spent quite a bit of time studying the life of the Apostle Paul. Not because he was special, but because the Holy Spirit, in his great wisdom, has given us numerous details about the life of Jesus and of the life of Paul in the New Testament.

We can say that if there are two individuals whose life and inner life and external ministry is described in great detail in the New Testament, it is the Lord Jesus Christ and the Apostle Paul. Paul said, follow me, as I follow Christ. So I find that if the Holy Spirit has chosen to do that, there must be a very good reason, and I seek to find out why has the Holy Spirit given me so much, written so much about Paul's inner life and outer life, because there was an outstanding servant of God, not one who never fails.

That's the thing that encourages me. All the biographies written of God's servants nowadays, you read it and it's almost as though he never made a mistake in his life, and such biographies do not encourage me at all. But when I read about the Apostle Paul, I read about an honest man who made mistakes.

Do you know who wrote the Acts of the Apostles? It was Luke. Do you know who Luke was? Luke was one of Paul's closest co-workers, and a lot of the Acts of the Apostles is about Paul. And when Luke was writing about Paul, I know, if I were a co-worker of some great man of God, and I'm writing his life story, I will tell you, I will not like to write about any of his failures, about any of his mistakes, and say, how can I write about this great man of God? So I would write only the good points, and I'm sure Luke would have felt like writing like that.

But when Paul knew that Luke was writing all these things, he would have told him, now make sure, Luke, that you tell them how I fought with Barnabas, and how we could not get along with each other, and we separated. Make sure you write down there how I circumcised Timothy. Make sure you write down there how I shaved my head following the Jewish custom, and following the temple rituals long after I became a Christian.

Don't forget to write there how I shouted at the high priest and told him, God will smite you, you whitewashed wall. Let them see that when they slapped Jesus, he never shouted back. But let them see that when they slapped me, I shouted back.

But he repented, he confessed. I loved such a man. A man who was transparent.

A man who did not pretend that he never made a mistake. A man who was eager that his biographer should tell other people about the stupid mistakes he did, so that they can have hope that even a man who has made mistakes like that can still serve God. So here is one of the great secrets of his life, Acts 24

verse 16.

He says, in view of this I do my best to maintain always a blameless conscience both before God and before men. And I want to say to all of you, my brothers and sisters, always seek to maintain a blameless conscience before God and before men. A blameless, this is the perfection that I preach.

People say I preach perfection, I do. I preach perfection in conscience, not perfection in life. And what does perfection in conscience mean? It doesn't mean I never make a mistake.

It means as soon as I make a mistake, I set it right. As soon as I am aware of it. With God or with men.

As soon as I am aware that I have done something wrong. It may not be wrong by the world's standards, but the Spirit of God convicts me it's wrong by God's standards. You know when we are first converted, our conscience is not very sensitive.

We have to commit some great sins before our conscience disturbs us. But God's desire is that as we grow, our conscience becomes more and more sensitive. It's something like a weighing machine that has been spoiled.

You know our conscience is like a weighing machine, a very delicate weighing machine that is spoiled. Now, that needle in the weighing machine will not move until you put about 5 kilos in it. So if you put 4 kilos, the needle is not moving.

That means certain sins I do, I am not even disturbed. But if it becomes 5 kilos, then my conscience is convicted. But it shouldn't remain like that.

When God seeks to purify us, and over a period of time, the machine becomes more sensitive. After a while, 1 kilo, and the needle is beginning to move. And the Holy Spirit works on us, and after a while, 100 grams, needle is beginning to move.

Wonderful, this is progress. After a while, 1 gram, it's moving. I am convicted.

And then 1 milligram, I am convicted. This is spiritual growth, where my conscience is becoming more and more sensitive. And I am being convicted about small things, which 5 years ago I was not convicted about.

I am not ashamed to say that there are things I did 5 years ago, which I will not do today. Not gross sins, but fine things, fine things. I listen to my own tapes of 10 years ago, and I am ashamed.

I say, Lord, is this the way to speak? No. See, how shall we make our conscience more and more sensitive? By constant self-judgment. Let a man examine himself, and it says, let him break the bread.

I want to encourage you along this path of constant repentance, constant self-judgment. Not looking inside to discover something, that is introspection. I never look inside, because I know it's all corruption.

And I can't even see myself. What's the use looking inside? I am not telling you all to look inside. I will tell you how to see what's wrong in your life.

It says in Psalm 36, Psalm 36 and verse 9, in the last part of that Psalm it says, Lord, in your light, we will see light. So how do I judge myself? Not by looking inside, by some type of method which the psychologists teach. You know, there is a lot of psychology going on today, in Christian teaching.

They tell you, now think back to the time when you were in your mother's womb, and maybe your mother didn't want you, forgive your mother. Then think back to the time when you were born, and maybe somebody treated you like that. Do you see that in scripture? Do you find the apostles speaking like that? This is human psychology.

And I am sorry to say, so many believers who do not know the word of God, are being led astray by human psychology. They are good things. The devil comes as an angel of light, always.

His servants are servants of righteousness, not servants of sin. That is how he leads people astray. And that righteousness is not the righteousness of Christ.

And that's why they are led astray. So, it is in God's light I see light. When I come into God's presence, he will show me if there is anybody whom I have to forgive.

I don't have to mentally go back to my mother's womb, or go through any such psychological trick. I come into God's light, he tells me whom I have wronged. As I come to him, like Jesus said, you come to the altar, and there you remember that your brother has got something against you.

Leave your gift at the altar. First be reconciled to your brother. We have two offering boxes at the back of our meeting hall in Bangalore.

One for the brothers, one for sisters. And on the boxes, you know what we have written? We have not written, give unto the Lord. We have written, first be reconciled to your brother and sister.

And then give your offering. God will not accept it otherwise. We are trying to stop people from giving, not encourage them to give.

We are trying to stop people who have got a bad relationship with another brother from putting even one rupee into that offering box. And we have never suffered lack for our needs. But we have made people realize, we are not so crazy after your offerings.

We are crazy after your life, that you have a good relationship with people. First be reconciled, then bring your offering. Otherwise God won't accept it.

If you give an offering to the Lord of money, or prayer, or singing, or a message, or service, or anything, without being reconciled to your brother, I say, you might as well take that money and put it into the toilet and flush it down. It's just as good as putting it in the offering box. It does not, it will not be accepted by the Lord.

First be reconciled. I want to ask all of you sitting here this morning, are you reconciled? Do you have a grudge against somebody? Have you forgiven everybody who hurt you? Is your conscience clear on that? Have you spoken back to somebody just because they spoke to you in some way? I remember once, somebody called me on the telephone. People hear all types of stories about me, and they don't even bother to check up, and they believe it all.

And this man picked up the telephone and says, Brother Zach, I said yes. And he said, this thing that you are saying, and this thing, that, that, that. He went on and on and on, accusing me of all types of things.

I never said a word. I could have put the phone down, but that would be insulting. I wouldn't do that.

I listened. I kept the earphone very close. You know, such things you must hear very closely.

And he kept on and on and on and on and on. And after some time I said, Well brother, have you finished? He said yes. I said, I have nothing to say.

God bless you. And I put the phone down. After he put it down.

Six months later I got a letter from him. I said, he said, Brother, I am so sorry. I, what I heard was false.

It was all wrong. I believed it. And I thought that is how it was.

And I said all that. What would I have gained by shouting back at him on the phone, or trying to explain anything? Jesus never explained anything to anybody. He allowed people to misunderstand him left, right and center.

He knew that one day those who have ears to hear will hear. The rest, that misunderstanding itself will be a test to find out whether they are sincere. So, don't have a grudge against anybody.

At any time. I have sought to live by that verse of the Apostle Paul, I seek to maintain a conscience blameless of offense toward God and toward men. I remember once I went to a bank to get a bank draft.

And he told me to, they told me to come a little later at a certain time. And I went at that time. Some hours later.

And it was still not ready. So, I don't remember the exact details. It was many, many years ago.

Maybe twenty years ago. And I said to the bank manager, you know, when the previous manager was here, things were more efficient. But, I'll come back later.

And when I came back home, the Lord said, that's not the way to speak to a senior official in a bank. Go back and apologize. And don't apologize privately.

Apologize in front of everybody. I went back. And I said, I'm sorry for what I said.

You know, it's little things like this. Small things the Spirit says. It's not right the way you did it.

I remember once I had to correct a younger brother in our church for something that was wrong. And I did it for the Lord's sake, for the church, for the purity of the church. And when I came back, after doing that, the Lord said, you were very hard.

You needed to correct him, but there was no need to correct him so hard. So, I went back to him and I said, brother, what I said was right, but I'm sorry I spoke so hard to you. Forgive me.

You know, we're not perfect. But if we humble ourselves and acknowledge our failure, the Lord will give us grace. And I can testify, He has given me abundant grace in my life, in my ministry, in my walk with Him, in my family life, and in everything.

And I want to keep my conscience sensitive, even in bringing up children. Like all parents, I have believed firmly in discipline. I have used the rod on all my sons.

But there were times when I have beaten my sons in anger, and I have gone to my room and wept, and said, Lord, forgive me. The discipline was necessary, but the anger was not necessary. I have failed as a father.

Teach me how to discipline my children without anger. And I have done it again with anger. It didn't happen in one time.

And I have wept again. I cannot think of the number of times I have apologized to my children for my failure as a father. I have never wanted my children to see their dad as a man who never made a mistake.

I have always wanted them to see their dad as an honest, upright, sincere man who made mistakes, but whom God still used. Because I know that that is going to be a greater encouragement to them than if I present to them an image of a father who never made a mistake, who is some great man of God, respected by everybody. I'm sorry to say there are fathers like that who give a wrong image to their children, and that's why their children go astray.

My children have not lost their respect for me because I apologize. They respect me much more. I can communicate to them freely.

I have always wanted my children to grow up to be my brothers, and they are my brothers today. In every relationship in life, whether it's with our family, or with our fellow believers and sisters, even with people who are much younger. You see, we have this crazy idea in India and in Asian culture that you never apologize to people who are younger.

It's not true. In Christ there is no such thing. If you are wrong, you are wrong.

And even if somebody is 50 years younger to you, if you have done it wrong, you have done it wrong. And you have to apologize to him. Husband has to apologize to wife.

I have had to apologize to my wife numerous times. I have failed as a husband, I have failed as a father, I have failed as a brother. And I have repented.

And I want to live in constant repentance. I want this weighing machine. It started off with registering only 5 kilos.

It's become better and better and better through the years. I'm not satisfied. I'm pressing on to perfection.

Where the smallest little unchrist-like attitude or word or action will be wrong. There are times when I take my scooter to a petrol pump to get petrol filled in it and maybe the little boy there spills some oil over my clothes accidentally or something. What is my reaction? It must be christ-like.

Or maybe he is a little slow in doing things. I know the times when I have gone away from that petrol pump and the Lord has said, you didn't speak in a christ-like way. I have repented.

I want to speak to these. I know when I go to a scooter repair workshop and here is a little boy who is beaten by everybody in that shop. The small little boy trying to earn a living at the age of 8 or 9 years.

And I have to represent Christ to him. I have to show him that the whole world is not full of people who beat you and hammer you. God has placed some people on the world to love you, be good to you and to slip a little money into his hand when his master is not looking.

To encourage him. We are called to go around this world spreading goodness. It's not just preaching.

Our conscience must be sensitive. I remember once when a beggar came to my house. I was not rude.

But when he went away, the Lord said to me, would you have spoken to him in the same way if he had come with a suit and tie to your house? And I repented. I said, Lord, I am sorry. I tend to speak to people depending on the dress they are wearing.

Forgive me. Let me see in a beggar the image of God as much as I see in a great officer the image of God. I am a servant of God.

I am not like people in the world. Jesus has made me different. I am to be his representative.

You are to be his representative. Never mind if other people around you are not worried in their conscience. Does your conscience convict you, for example, when you speak without respect to people? It says in 1 Peter chapter 3, verse 15, Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts and always be ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence and keep a good conscience so that in the thing which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.

What does it say, verse 16? People may slander you, tell all types of false stories about you, but live in such a way before them that one day they will be put to shame that they said all types of stories about you. If we love them, we can win them. But it says here that we must, one area where we must keep a good conscience is in speaking to people, verse 15, the last part, with gentleness and reverence.

How many of you have the habit of meditating on individual words of scripture? Blessed is the man who meditates on God's law day and night. Whatever he does will prosper. I have wanted such a life, that whatever I touch my hand to, it must prosper.

But then I must meditate on God's word day and night. I cannot read it day and night. I may read it only a few minutes, but meditate, I can meditate.

For example, reverence before God, I know. But what is this about reverence to men? I must speak to men with respect. You know, in our churches, I have taught all the married people, never call your wife, Eddie.

I say that's a, I should call her by some loving name, not Eddie. And some people say, brother, it is out of love that I call her Eddie. I say then, why don't you let her out of love call you Eddie.

That will never happen. You don't want that type of love. It's all hypocrisy.

If it is love, it can be both ways. I should speak respectfully. I have taught people in our churches, don't even call little children Eddie.

I should call them more like, or by their name. Call them respectfully. I want to speak with respect, even to little children.

Because I am a servant of Jesus Christ. And I am a servant of all men. Does a servant call his master, Eddie? I am a servant.

I have no other calling on earth till the end of my life, but to be a servant. Everybody is my master. I remember once when I, not once, different times when I have been to a local church, and some people don't come to the meeting in time.

And you know, I grew up in the military from the age of 15, where 6.30 parade means 6.25 you have to be there. If you come at 6.31, you are running around the parade ground 10 times you will never be late again for the rest of your life. So this is the way I grew up.

So, it's very difficult for me to be late for a meeting, or late for an appointment, or late for anything. It's so much again, sometimes it happens because of unavoidable circumstances, but, but then, all the other people in my church didn't come from the military. Nobody did.

So they, take it lightly and, it used to disturb me, it doesn't disturb me now. You know how, the Lord said, if breakfast is at 8 o'clock, the servant must be there before 8 o'clock. The master can come anytime he likes.

You are a servant. You be there on time. Let the masters and the mistresses come anytime they like.

You serve them. Don't have a, anger against them for being late. Serve them.

Some of them, after a period of time, will also become servants and come on time. But those who want to remain Maharajas, let them remain Maharajas and Maharanis, and come whenever they like. See, life is so.

If the master shouts at the servant, what is the servant supposed to do? Yeah, I am sorry. Quietly move out. All the problems that Christian workers have, is because they are not servants.

They are not slaves. They don't seek. Paul said, I have made myself servants to all men.

That is how we are to be. In one way. In another way, I am not a servant of any man.

I have been bought with a price. I will not be the servant of any man. Nobody can control my mouth.

Nobody can control what I say, what I do. I am a servant of God. But having become free from all men, I have made myself the servant of all.

That's what Paul said. Keep your conscience clear. Any little thing, which the Lord reminds you of.

We don't have to settle everything in our past life, because we may not remember all the things in our past life. But it's not just paying back money. I remember when I was converted, and I took baptism, the Lord reminded me.

I have done probably 101 wrong things in my life. But the Lord reminded me only of 2 things to set right. One was the taxes and duty that I owed to the government, which is about 3-4 times salary, month's salary, which I had to give.

That I did. But another thing the Lord reminded me at that time, was more difficult. And that was, when I was a little boy, I used to collect stamps.

And you know how those who collect stamps, exchange stamps with other people, when we have duplicates. And one day, I was exchanging stamps with one of my cousins, and when he was not looking,

I stole one of his stamps. Now I had stopped collecting stamps, when I got long after, it was long after that, that the Lord spoke to me.

And he had stopped collecting stamps, but the Lord said to me, write a letter of apology to him. And that was more difficult than giving 4 month's salary. Because here my pride.

I thought that fellow will think I am crazy, to write about 9 years ago, I stole one small stamp from you, which is worthless. He will think I have gone off my head. The Lord made me write that letter.

I thank God I did it. My brothers and sisters, I am not asking you to look inside, and dig up everything in the past. But if there is some particular thing, that you find the Lord is always reminding you, humble yourself, write that letter of apology, set it right.

Keep your conscience clear. I believe the rivers of living water, are in abundance in the heavens. They get choked, in the channel of our heart.

Because we don't keep a good conscience. They get dirty, as they flow through the pipe. And other people get dirty water, because I am not keeping my pipe clean.

What am I saying? Keep the pipe clean. Always. And if you can start when you are young, and determine that you will always do this, then even when you are my age, you will do it readily.

You will be glad to humble yourself, and ask anybody's forgiveness in the whole world. It won't be a problem to you. But if you delay it, it will be very difficult.

There are lots of believers in our country, who do not know how to humble themselves, and ask forgiveness, even from their marriage partners. It is so difficult for their pride to break. God has not been able to break them.

If you find it difficult to ask forgiveness, from somebody much younger to you, much junior to you, it means you are not a broken man. A broken man has no problem. He knows he is nothing.

He says, what am I? What dignity do I have to preserve? What prestige do I have to preserve? I am not a big man. I am a sinner saved by the grace of God. And I am not God.

So I have made mistakes. I shall continue to make mistakes. Next week I will make mistakes.

Next year I shall make mistakes. As I know them, I shall set them right. I won't do them deliberately.

Well, sometimes I may stupidly even do some deliberate thing, but I shall repent more radically of that. But even if we don't deliberately do wrong, we are still accidentally hurting people. We must speak to everybody with respect and reverence, and our conscience must convict us, when we don't do that.

You know, I believe that it is the bad use of our tongue, that prevents many, many believers, from having God's word on their tongue. I cannot use my tongue as I like, during the week, gossip, backbite, speak rudely to people, get angry, get upset, slander. And then when I come here, I say, Oh God, please put your word on my tongue.

He will not put his word on your tongue. Because you rented out your tongue to the devil, the rest of the week. That is one of the main reasons, why God's word is not on the tongues of many of His servants.

How many of you want to have God's word on your tongue, when you stand up to speak His word and preach? Are you serious? Do you really want to be God's mouthpiece? I will show all of you, how you can be God's mouthpiece. I don't know how many of you will take me seriously. But I will tell you from my experience, it's been blessed for me.

Here is the answer. Jeremiah chapter 15, Jeremiah 15 and verse 19. The Lord says, and here, if you return, I will restore you, and you will stand before me.

When do I stand before the Lord? Not only when I preach, all the time. And, if you remove all the, if you extract the precious from the worthless, that is in your conversation, you will become my spokesman. Listen to this.

If you, will get rid of all the worthless things in your conversation, and keep that which is precious. By precious I don't mean only scripture. You speak to me, you will find those who know me best.

I am not always quoting the word of God. I am happy to speak about normal earthly things. I am not a unnatural artificial type of person.

I can speak about any earthly thing, because I want to build fellowship. I remember when my children, to build fellowship with my children, I would read the comics my children read. I would read Tintin, and things like that.

And even now, to fellowship with children, when I go to a child's person's home, I go to a home and I say, what do you like to read? Tintin. Oh, I say fine, come let's talk about Tintin, and Captain Haddock, and all those things. And I get fellowship with that little child.

I don't speak to him about James chapter 4, or something like that. That will come later. I first built fellowship through Tintin.

And then, when I speak the word of God, he will listen to me. Jesus loved little children. I want to spend time with little children.

If my children were interested in cricket, I would be interested in cricket. I mean, not because that's the thing for me, because I want to build fellowship. So that's not worthless.

That's not worthless conversation. That is precious, because it builds fellowship between people. It puts people at ease.

Like Jesus met the Samaritan woman and said, can you give me some water? We must talk to people at their level, the things they are interested in, and gradually lead them on to better things. Get rid of all the worthless things in your conversation, and keep what is precious. What shall I get rid of? I shall get rid of all the gossiping, the backbiting, the evil speaking of other servants of God.

Many people ask me, what do you think about this servant of God? I say, listen, you will never get me to speak evil about any servant of God, even if I disagree with that man's methods. I may say I disagree with the man's methods, but he is God's servant. You will never hear me, privately or publicly, speaking evil of any man who is a servant of God.

It's completely out of the question, because I have to give an account to God, one day, for every word I speak. I want to extract the worthless from my conversation, because it is so important for me, when I

stand up to speak God's word, that God's word should be on my lips. A thousand people may be dependent on me to hear the word of God.

Shall I let them down? Shall I disappoint them by sitting at home and gossiping? No, I shall not. I shall guard my mouth. I shall be careful, let other people speak what they like.

I can't. Other people are permitted to do so many things. I am not permitted, because I am a spokesman of God.

And those one thousand people who listen to me, must not be disappointed when they have to hear me. They must hear a word from God. And particularly, when I live in a country, where it is so rare to hear the prophetic word.

Will you take that challenge? And say, Lord, I want to be your spokesman. Take this word seriously. Matthew chapter 12.

Matthew's gospel chapter 12. And verse 36. Jesus said, I say to you, that every careless word that men shall speak, they shall render account for it in the day of judgment.

Every useless word, careless word, every single one, every careless word that I speak from the pulpit, every careless word that I sit at home and talk, every careless word that I sit and talk and gossip to other people, I will give an account to God in the day of judgment. It doesn't matter whether you heard it or not. I will give an account in the day of judgment.

I fear. I am a man who fears God. I want to live in a greater fear of God, particularly in two areas.

One is the area of handling money and the other is my speech. You be careful in these areas. Maybe I can add a third area and that is also in our dealings with the opposite sex.

Men with women, women with men. If you are careful, I seek to be extremely careful in these three areas. In the handling of money, in the words that come out of my mouth and in dealing with the opposite sex.

I want to be like that even if I am 85 years old one day. I want to live in fear because I am a servant of God. God has given me a great and holy calling and I cannot let him down.

He has allowed me to be born at a particular time to fulfill a particular task in this country and I cannot let him down. You have been born at a particular time in a particular place to fulfill a particular task. Don't let God down.

Don't let him down. Don't be like the other full time workers and all around you. Be different.

Keep your conscience sensitive. We will fail. I have failed as I have told you.

I have repented. I have wept. I have mourned.

And because of that, the weighing machine becomes more sensitive. If you never mourn, you never weep. For example, if you lose your temper at your wife and you can sleep peacefully that night, something is wrong.

How in the world can you sleep peacefully at night when you have shouted at your wife? I can't understand it. But there are many believers who do. They are the ones who are useless to God.

When I sin, I have to weep. I say, Lord, that is so dishonoring to Christ. Forgive me.

I repent. That's not the way for me to speak. I want to learn to speak like Jesus Christ would speak.

To all people, I want to show respect to lepers, beggars, children, particularly to the outcasts of society for whom nobody cares. I want to treat them with respect and speak to them with respect because I am a servant of God. And God loves them.

Jesus died for them. And any man for whom Jesus died is one whom I must treat with respect. These are little, little principles.

If you keep your conscience clear in these areas, you will find it goes extremely well with you. Keep your conscience clear in the area of money. Oh, how many people have destroyed themselves by unfaithfulness in money.

You know, I found when I went to some mission stations as a young person, I found people who, if it was mission money, spend it as you like, but if it is your own money from your own pocket, be very careful. And I thought, is it like this? Is there a difference between, is that the Lord's money and whose money is this in my purse? The devil's money? I have to be careful with the devil's money, but the Lord's money can be spent. It's crazy.

If at all you should be careful with the Lord's money and the other money, spend as you like. And one of the prayers I prayed is, Lord, help me, that there will be no distinction in my thinking between Lord's money and my money. I want to be equally faithful with that as with this.

You know, these are little things. You be faithful with money, let your conscience tell you, I am not here to judge you. Never mind if other people are doing it.

I see other people around me, even in some of our churches, I find that they spend the money from the offerings for things which I will never spend. I tell them, I say, Brother, I think we should be careful, but I don't judge them. I don't know at what point their weighing machine is registering.

I know at what point my weighing machine is registering. And I have to be very, very sensitive if I want to be the Lord's spokesman. And I have seen some of these people.

They don't cheat, they don't steal, they don't take the Lord's money for themselves, like some unrighteous servants of God. They are just careless. And I see when these people get up to speak the word of God, there is nothing in what they say.

Why? God has seen. Not that they cheated. They were not like Judas Iscariot, stealing.

They were just careless. They never allowed their conscience to be sensitive. I know whenever I seek to use the Lord's money, the Lord says, Will you use it that way, if it is your money? If it is your hard-earned money? You know, money which we receive freely as a gift, we don't value.

Money which we earn by ourselves through hard work, we learn to value more. If you have, if somebody gives you a large gift, say, I got it freely, I can spend it freely. If you have received a rich inheritance from your parents, that's free, I can spend it as I like.

But what about what you earn with your own sweat? That you are very careful about. Why can't we be as careful about some money I receive as an inheritance or some money which is given to me as a gift? If you are not careful about these things, I'll tell you what will be the result. When you get up to speak, God will not be with your mouth.

That is the tragedy of Christian work in India today. That is the tragedy in the ministry today. People are not keeping their conscience clear.

You know why God's word was in Paul's mouth from the beginning to the end of his life? Because he was faithful. He always tried his best, he said, to keep his conscience clear. Any of you can be a faithful servant of God.

I said on the first day, is it possible that God can leave a country like India with 970 million people without profits? Is it because he doesn't love India? I'm sure God chose many people from the mother's womb to be prophets. But he would not force them. They had to be faithful with their words, they had to be faithful with money, they had to be faithful with women, and they were careless, and they lost their calling.

One last word. Revelation. Chapter 3. Verse 11.

The Lord says, I'm coming quickly. Hold fast what you have, so that no one else takes your crown. What's that? Somebody else can take my crown? How is that possible? That means God had a ministry for me, and if I were faithful in it, I would have got a crown? But, because I was unfaithful, God's work was still done.

But somebody else did it. He got the crown. I have a little theory.

It is not from scripture, you don't have to take it seriously, you can forget it if you want. It is possible that Judas Iscariot was really supposed to write the epistles, but he failed. And so God had to choose Paul to replace him.

Because Judas Iscariot had a brilliant brain, just like Paul's. It is possible that God may have a ministry for you, and you may fail. Somebody else will do it.

He will get his crown and your crown. Let us fear, brothers and sisters. Let us, in the short life God has given us, give to God a life that will please Him by keeping our conscience sensitive.

The Lord bless you all. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we pray You will apply what we have heard today to our hearts, and help us to walk in Your light.

In Jesus' name we ask. Amen.

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