

Guilt & Regret: How to Overcome

Part 3: Avoiding the Seared Conscience

(preached 7/28/24)

Please turn to *1 Timothy 4:1*

PREVIOUSLY:

- Our conscience was created the moment Adam sinned: now we know both good and evil.
- God programmed His laws into our hearts and minds, which makes up our conscience.
- Other “commandments” have been added to this from our life experiences, other people, etc.
- Our conscience is our main ACCUSER and EXCUSER.
- God designed it to be a watchman to warn us when sin waits at the door.
- A clean conscience relies upon the moral commands of God.
- A guilty or “defiled” conscience results when we’ve ignored it and it’s gotten “angry” with us.
- It also exalts and enforces “other” commandments we’ve taken on to be equal to those of the Lord’s.
- It begins to accuse and condemn us, even to the point of calling us terrible names like “worthless, lazy, stupid, fat,” etc.
- We need to “forgive ourselves” in the sense that our conscience’ needs to realize our debt has been paid for by the Blood of Jesus.
- It needs to be reminded that we’re in the NC where righteousness is apart from obedience to God’s Law but depends on faith in Christ.
- To keep a clear conscience, however, we must make the payment by agreeing with it!
- We never agree when it condemns or calls names, only when it points out sin.
- When we ignore or argue with it, it drags us to “court” where we’re judged, found guilty, and tormented.
- Our conscience isn’t a buddy but an adversary.
- Let’s agree with our conscience that 1) sin is wrong and 2) there’s no excuse or justification for it.

TODAY we’re going to talk about *a dull or “seared” conscience*.

I was going to talk about this anyway, but it was going to be the last sermon in this series until I saw **the opening video for the Summer Olympics**. It depicted Jesus and the Apostles at The Last Supper reenacted by Drag Queens! It was disgusting & blasphemous and proved out the prophetic warning given by the Apostle Paul 2 millennia ago.

[1Ti 4:1-2 ESV] 1 Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, 2 through the insincerity of liars whose **consciences are seared**,

THE SPIRIT PAUL IS REFERRING TO making this prediction is none other than God the Holy Spirit, Who tells us that in “later times”—*meaning the times right before the 2nd coming of Jesus*—some will depart from the faith. The “faith” being referred to is the Christian faith.

“Depart” means to “withdraw oneself, refrain from, to desert, revolt, and incite [others] TO revolt.” Verse 1 could read “some will revolt from the faith, and incite others to do the same.” What is the inspiration for them doing so? What led them to reject Christ? Paul explains: deceitful spirits and their TEACHINGS.

Demons aren’t just Hollywood monstrous beings—they were and are sought after by people for their wisdom. The translation of the word “demon” or “devil” in the Bible is a divine being, a god, superior to humanity, ancient, and full of knowledge. So when people attempt to “summon” them they’re doing so to HEAR their teachings! Again: this applies to the ancient and modern world.

Here in the material world demons rarely appear. They’re invisible, we can’t hear them audibly, and can’t touch them...but they exist and are here. Thus how they deceive people is through their TEACHING/DOCTRINE. The elites of this world are already in contact with them and pass their teaching down through their chosen vessels.

They have a much larger platform than the Church does. They teach and preach their doctrine from the pulpit of the MSM, the Entertainment Industry, the Educational System, Big Business, and especially politicians. They spread things that fly directly in the face of God’s Moral Commandments and they’re attempting to do exactly what I’ve already told you: *to program our consciences*.

To replace the morality of God with that of demons.

Isaiah prophesied the same:

[/Isa 5:20 ESV] 20 **Woe to those who call evil good and good evil**, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!

THE GOAL OF SATAN AND HIS DEMONS IS TO TURN OUR CONSCIENCE FROM A SHARP SWORD TO A BUTTER KNIFE.

[Demonstrate butter knife]

When flesh is seared by fire, it kills the nerves so that you can't feel anything. Years ago there was an episode of ER where a doctor gets severe burns on his arm. One day while trying to cook, his arm catches on fire and he doesn't even know it...until he can smell his own flesh burning.

THE DEMONIC DOCTRINE COMING FROM THE PULPIT OF THE WORLD IS SEARING THE CONSCIENCES OF PEOPLE, destroying proper discernment between good and evil to the point of switching them around. *The devil is preparing the world for the coming of his messiah—the Antichrist.*

Not only has the devil revolted against Jesus, **but he is also inciting millions of others to do the same.** Not us!

Why not us?

- Because we have the Holy Spirit.
- We have God's written Word, the Bible.
- And we have the Church—each other.
- *We need all 3!*

Look at verse 2 of 1 Timothy 4: *the people sharing Satan's gospel are already disciples* of the same: their consciences have already been seared and they've already replaced good with evil, and evil with good.

In Romans 1 Paul teaches that some reject God and His ways, exchanging the truth for a lie. *What truth are they exchanging and what lie are they believing?*

- The truth that God is Spirit and He regenerates our spirit to look like Jesus. This is the REAL us.
- The lie is that the flesh and its desires is what we should follow and is all we have.
- Paul explains in a later chapter of Romans that the desires of our spirit is at war with those of the flesh.
- He reminds us that our bodies are holy temples to the Lord, no vessels of sin.

[Rom 1:21-25 ESV] 21 For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Claiming to be wise, they became fools, 23 and exchanged the glory of the

immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. 24 Therefore God **gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity**, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, 25 **because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator**, who is blessed forever! Amen.

- When people reject God and His Saving grace, they become fools.
- The more people turn to the flesh and its pleasures, the darker their hearts become.
- If people do both of the above and keep doing it, the Lord will eventually give them over to their desires completely.
- In other words, they've dulled our consciences to the point where what they formerly knew was evil they now think is good.

We often talk about how American society is going crazy and what we're seeing is exactly what Paul describes in Romans 1. What we called evil 50 years ago is now openly embraced, celebrated, and passed into law here in the 2020's and it's not progress.

You and I must keep our internal swords sharp! Why the "sword" reference?

[Heb 4:12 ESV] 12 For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Our conscience has the commands of God written upon it. It's a sharp two-edged sword which is why it HURTS when it points out where we've fallen short. EX: There have been many times I've tried to "convince" God to do something I want, and the response from my conscience EVERY time I try is ***"thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."*** OUCH! It hurts every time it talks!

Look at the purpose of God's Sharp Sword:

- It PIERCES
- It DISCERNS

PIERCING is a sword thrusting straight into something or someone penetrating armor, clothing, the skin, and getting through to the soft insides.

[DEMONSTRATE]

DISCERNING speaks to a sword cutting in a chopping action: like a splitting maul/ax cutting a chunk of wood in two.

[DEMONSTRATE]

WHEN GOD'S WORD IS SPOKEN AND HEARD, IT PIERCES THE HARD SHELL OF OUR HEARTS AND ENTERS INTO IT.

When God's Word is declared and heard, *it divides good from evil*, truth from falsehood. It reveals our true desires and intentions.

How should we respond when our conscience quote's God's Word?

We covered that last week: *agree with our adversary quickly*.

What are we tempted to do, though? **WHAT IS THE VICIOUS CYCLE** we can find ourselves in that tries to dull our conscience?

[Rom 7:7-20 ESV] 7 What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, "You shall not covet." 8 But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. For apart from the law, sin lies dead. 9 I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive and I died. 10 The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me. 11 **For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me** and through it killed me. 12 So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good. 13 Did that which is good, then, bring death to me? By no means! It was sin, producing death in me through what is good, in order that sin might be shown to be sin, and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure. 14 For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. 15 For I do not understand my own actions. **For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.** 16 Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. 17 So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. 18 For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. **For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. 19 For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing.** 20 Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.

Summarized: *when God's Law is quoted, sin takes advantage of us by trying to get our flesh to revolt.*

It enflames the passions of the flesh to make us want what we shouldn't have, trying to get us to rebel.

Our conscience tells us:

- not to have the 2nd bowl of ice cream
- tells us not to lose our cool and tell so-and-so off
- tells us to serve and sacrifice more and put off our own wants and needs.
- Eventually we get mad and rebel against it: we have the ice cream, tell so-and-so off, and put ourselves first.

That results in guilt, shame, and self-condemnation. We call ourselves fat for eating the IC, feel bad about telling so and so off, and call ourselves selfish for putting ourselves first.

So we try to listen and obey...and the whole thing starts over again. This is an unhealthy cycle that only dulls our conscience or keeps us in a perpetual state of shame/defiled conscience.

We need to have a cleansed conscience. When you and I operate with a conscience cleaned by the blood of Jesus and washed by the water of the Word, it's a sharp and powerful weapon that we swing to easily discern the teachings of demons, reject them, and warn others to do the same! *It helps us to LIVE what we believe.*

When our swords are sharp **we also train and disciple our children** so that they will grow up to be soldiers for Jesus (spiritually speaking)! That not only will they walk in the Light of God, but then go on to teach their kids to do the same!

[Heb 9:14 ESV] 14 how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, **purify our conscience from dead works** to serve the living God.

Let the Blood of Christ cleanse my conscience and yours. Let it be the payment for the remission of sins. It will help us keep our internal swords sharp and we'll continue to discern good from evil.