

Righteous Conscious

I have really enjoyed our midweek service series about the Tabernacle. We have been going through the different articles of the tabernacle and using it as a tutor to worship. It has been fun to see Jesus all throughout the tabernacle. Now, in the resource I am using to study, they have an application after every chapter. The problem is that most of the application is the same. It is mainly focusing on our sin and shortcomings. Now, dealing with your sin is a very good thing. I love in 2 Kings 23 the story of Josiah purging the Temple and kingdom of all the false idols and false worship. Josiah didn't just remove all the idols, but he went as far as digging up the bones of the false priests and grinding their bones up. He wanted to make sure idol worship was completely done. Dealing with and removing sin in your life is a very good thing. Did everyone just hear what I said? Dealing with and removing sin is a very good thing and we need to do it. However, you can have the wrong view of sin and fall into the mindset that your sin is a reflection of your identity.

Here is the truth, you and I are completely forgiven, healed, delivered, and made whole. Our sins have been hidden in Christ, and we are God's beloved children through the blood and grace of Jesus Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:21 says, "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." Everyone, repeat after me, "I am the righteousness of God in Christ." Jesus dealt with your sin. On the cross He said, "It is finished." The devil lost, we have been born-again, we have been made a new creation in Christ, the old is gone and the new has come, hallelujah! If today you are begging God to *make* you righteous, you should probably get saved. Although we still deal with sin in our flesh, it is not our identity and it does not change our position in Christ.

We are going to see today that God has called us to focus on our righteousness and not our sin. Hebrews 10 speaks about not having a consciousness of sin. Our sin will desensitize us to the presence of God, but our sin will not separate us from God or change our righteousness. What I just said was pretty powerful. Your sin will affect you pursuing God, but it will not change how God sees you or your position in Christ. Today I want to teach a message title "Righteous Conscious." I want to share the dangers of being sin conscious and what we can do to live with a greater awareness of what Christ has done for us.

If you have your Bibles, go with me to Romans chapter 8. Romans 8 could be its own book in the Bible and is so powerful in truths that will completely change your life. We are going to read the first 11 verses:

Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. 3 For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, 4 so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. 5 For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. 6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, 7 because the

mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so, 8 and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. 9 However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. 10 If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness. 11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. – Romans 8:1-11 NASB1995

Paul is affirming his audience that if they are in Christ they are saved and are declared righteous. Because of this, we should *set our minds* to things of the Spirit and not of the flesh. Let me give you my own personal definition of sin and righteous consciousness:

Sin-conscious = being fixated on sin, guilt, shame, and condemnation believing that there is a still a sin debt to be owed acceptance to be earned.

Righteousness Conscious = the constant awareness of being made right with God through the finished work of Jesus and the conviction of the believer's identity in Christ.

I heard this story of a drunk man who made the stupid decision to get in a car and drive. He ended up driving on the wrong side of the road and hit an 18-year-old lady head on, killing her instantly. The family sued the drunk driver for 1.5 million and won. However, the family did something very different. After they won, they changed the amount and settled for a fee of \$969 but it had to be paid in weekly \$1 checks. Every week from prison the drunk driver had to send a check of \$1 to the family. It became painful and depressing to the drunk driver as he was constantly being reminded of the horrible thing he did. He stopped paying after a couple years and the family brought, he back to court to resume payments. The family thought they were doing something great by forcing this man to remember his crime, but the problem was, they were suffering as well. Both the victims and the criminal were reflecting on a horrible pain every single week. There was no real forgiveness or healing, just constant reminders of the crime. We can do the same in our lives when all we do is focus on our sin and shortcoming. Instead, we need repentance, healing, and a strong conviction of our righteousness.

Let me break down what sin consciousness does and how we can repent of it:

What does sin consciousness produce:

#1 – Fear.

Fear is a very common thing in our society today, but it is not from God nor does that Lord desire that we live with fear. 2 Timothy 1:7 says that God did not give us a spirit of fear. Also notice that this verse says a spirit of fear. Fear is not an emotion it is a demon. That's why 1 John 4:18 says perfect love casts out fear. I have preached a lot about fear here in the church, so I won't go into it too much. The good news is that if we seek the Lord according to Psalm 34:4 the Lord will deliver us from all fear.

#2 – Unworthiness.

In the natural, if you mess up on the same thing over and over again you will eventually get to a place where you don't believe you have failed, but that *you* are a failure. By focusing on your sin all the time, the devil has the opportunity to convince you that you are a failure and that God does not care about you. Go back to the very first sin and reflect on how the devil deceived Adam and Eve. The devil said, "God knows that if you eat of this tree, you will be wise and be like God." The devil lied because Adam and Eve were already like God and could get all the wisdom they needed from the Lord. But he lied and got them to believe they were missing out. The same tactic is used today. The devil lies to you in an attempt to get your mind off the Spirit and onto the flesh so that you feel unworthy and do not operate in your authority.

#3 - Motivation for works.

When someone feels genuine remorseful over their sin the natural thing they want to do is make up for it. If you cancel on someone last minute you might say something like, "I am so sorry let me make it up to you." Their problem is that we can't do that with God. We can't sin and then make it up to Him. Jesus already made up for it on the cross. God is not looking for you to make it up to Him, He is looking for you to repent and stop focusing on the sin and instead focus on righteousness. God works could not save anyone in the Old Testament and it can't today either. We don't work for God's love, we work from God's love. We don't do good works to get God's approval; we do good works to show others the love of God. Sin consciousness will cause you to be motivated to work to pay back a sin debt that does not exist.

#4 - Desensitization for the Presence

Rather than going to God and repenting of whatever sin it may be, you avoid going to God and try to figure it out on your own. You become more sensitive to the world than you do God. In your sin, your natural reaction should be to boldly approach the throne of *grace* and find mercy in our time of need. The more you try to fight sin logically, naturally, and worldly, the more desensitized to the presence of God you will become. Some people may say things like, "I feel so dry" or "I feel so lost." The reality is that you are simply avoiding the Father for whatever reason. Go to God and stay there on your face until your heart connects with His.

#5 - More Sin.

I don't watch a lot of TV but when I do, my family thinks I'm crazy because I actually enjoy commercials...especially if they are funny. But one type of commercial I do not like is the prescription medications. You watch two seconds of what the medication is supposed to do and then for the next minute listen to all the side effects while people prance through fields of flowers or something. "Here, take this cholesterol medicine. The side effects are heartburn, diarrhea, suicidal thoughts, loss of appetite, and death." It's almost as if you are better without the medicine. You want to take this pill to make you better and it's like it's making you worse. Some may think that if I focus on my sin it will help it go away. No, it can make it worse and you might find yourself sinning more by focusing on it. Instead chose to focus on the finished work of Christ. Now, onto what we CAN do:

How to be Righteousness Conscious:

#1 - Accept you are FULLY forgiven

Colossians 1:13-14 says, "For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." Paul again affirms that we need to focus on heavenly things not earthly in Colossians 3:1-3 saying, "Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God." We are so forgiven, God chooses not to remember our sins. Hebrews 8:12 says, "For I will be merciful to their iniquities, And I will remember their sins no more." If you are fully convinced that you are forgiven you will not struggle over the issue of sin. You will repent, seek the Father's mercy, and pursue His presence.

#2 – Keep Your Mind Renewed.

There's a few topics that I preach on over and over and renewing the mind is one of them. The simple idea is that if you let a lie in, you need to reject it and then replace it with a truth found in the Word of God. But we can take it a step further. I don't want to volley back and forth with the devil's lie. I'd rather be so full of truth, lies can't make it in period. The Lord reminded me of this last Friday. I have plumbers here installing the new drinking fountain which is right in front of my office door. It was very loud. But my beautiful bride bought noise canceling headphones. When I am in the office and there is an activity or service going on being really loud these headphones are amazing. It is scary how they work. I looked up how noise canceling headphones work and found this out:

"Noise-cancellation headphones use tiny microphones to detect outside ambient noise and then, via internal circuitry, generate "anti-noise" sound waves that are exactly 180 degrees out of phase with the original, this destructive interference canceling the noise." So, noise canceling headphones use sound to cancel out other sound. How much more should the Word of God and His voice cancel out the noise of the world. Sorry devil I can't hear you.

#3 – Declare your righteousness.

Let me ask you a question you can shout the answer...what did I have you declare out loud earlier in this sermon? That's right, "I am the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus." Let's say it again, repeat after me, "I am the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus." It may sound really weird right after you have sinned to declare "I am the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus" but it is true and it is the power you need. Out of everything you can do to help focus on your righteousness, this is top tier. When you say something out loud, your ears hear it and your mind has to process it. You are using your authority when you declare and you are partnering with heaven.

#4 - **Guard your heart and mind.**

The final point is to guard your heart and mind in Jesus. Proverbs 4:23 says that we need to guard our hearts above all else for from it flow the springs of life. The Hebrew word for guard here really means to keep or watch. In other places in the Old Testament this word is used to say “watchmen.” They were like security guards who stood on the walls of the city to keep the city protected against invaders. The key is to catch the danger *before* it arrives. Part of guarding our hearts is to stop something before it has an opportunity to take root in our hearts. This is where you lean on the Holy Spirit. Holy Spirit can see beyond what we can. We need to walk in step with the Holy Spirit and lean into what He says.

Let me close with this question: so how do we deal with sin? The first is to have an encounter with the Lord that eclipses the sin you are running to. You have to taste the joy of living clean versus the sickening feeling you get when you knowingly sinned against God. The reason you sin is either you blew up do to being overwhelmed, or you are trying to ease some kind of stress/pain. If Jesus is not the Satisfier of your soul, sin will always be the victor in your flesh.