Blameless Conscience (Before God And Men)

Prepared by Nathan L Morrison for Sunday April 7th, 2019

Text: Acts 24:16

### Intro

1. God has given all people a conscience.
	1. The English word conscience is a compound word: “Con” (with) “science” (to know), therefore, literally, “a knowing with”, or a self-knowledge.
	2. In Greek “conscience” is a composition word.
		1. *Gr.* *sun [soon] (G4862):* with; a marker which shows association with another thing or person.
		2. *Gr.* *eido [i-do] (G1492):* to know; to possess information; recognize, to realize, to come to know; to understand; to be able to use knowledge.
		3. Conscience = *Gr. suneidesis [soon-i-day-sis] (G4893):* with knowing; self-perception, moral consciousness; to see completely: -- conscience.”
	3. *Suneidesis* is defined as: “That process of thought which distinguishes what it considers morally good or bad, commending the good and condemning the bad.” (Vine)
2. The conscience has been the subject of debate for many centuries from philosophers to scientists, to authors, and works of fiction.
	1. Isaac Walton said, “Look to your health; and if you have it, praise God, and value it next to a good conscience.”
	2. Pinocchio: Pinocchio (a wooden puppet) had a conscience – Jiminy Cricket! It explored the dangers of contradicting one’s conscience, all the while teaching another dangerous moral: to follow your conscience! (“Let your conscience be your guide!”)
	3. Mark Twain’s character Huckleberry Finn said, “Sometimes a feller’s conscience takes up more room than all the rest of a person’s insides.”
3. The New Testament has much to say about the conscience.
	1. The word is found 31 times in the New Testament.
	2. Paul used the term about 20 times, the “lion’s share” of use in N.T.
4. Throughout his writings, Paul spoke frequently of the conscience.
	1. Acts 24:16: “I also do my best to maintain always a blameless conscience both before God and before men.”
5. It is important to maintain a blameless conscience before God and men!

#### Possibility: A Clear Conscience (II Tim. 1:3)

* 1. The word “clear” = *Gr.katharos [kath-ar-os] (G2513):* clean (literally or figuratively): -- clear, pure. *(KJV: II Tim. 1:3 = “pure”)*
	2. I Tim. 1:5: One purpose of God’s word is to give us a “good conscience.” *(must train it)*
		1. Heb. 10:22: There are those who have an evil conscience.
			1. They know within themselves that they are not right with God.
			2. Rom. 3:9-18: They are devoted to a life of evil.
		2. Acts 23:1: Some, like Paul, have a “perfectly good conscience” because they thought what they were doing was right. (Acts 22:4; 26:9-11: Paul persecuted the Way to the death, imprisoned & tried to force Christians to blaspheme God)
	3. Leaders in the Church are to have a “clear conscience.”
		1. I Tim. 3:8-9: Deacons are to be men with a clear conscience.
	4. Men may obtain a good conscience:
		1. I Peter 3:20-21: In obedience to God’s command to be baptized, people may obtain a good conscience. (One’s sins are washed away)
		2. I Tim. 1:5, 19: The Christian must maintain a good conscience.
	5. By obedience to the word of God, one may have a clear conscience!

#### Maintain: A Good Conscience (I Tim. 1:5, 18-19)

* 1. Once obedient to God, must maintain a good conscience to have:
		1. Peace of mind. *(A troubled conscience often has no peace)*
		2. Confidence for living – don’t violate your conscience! (James 4:17)
	2. The conscience is a personal guide, ***not*** the standard for truth *(Acts 26:9).*
		1. One with a good conscience will be guided by truth. (Paul)
		2. The conscience does not establish truth but follows it – *must train conscience!*
		3. Acts 23:1: Paul knew the value of a good conscience.
		4. *Acts 26:9-23:* Paul relates his account of being set straight from the path he was on by his own thinking, and how he turned to the truth.
	3. *I Tim. 1:19:* There is a correlation in holding faith and the good conscience.
		1. Rom. 14:23: There is a grave danger in doing something that we believe is wrong! (James 4:17)
		2. I Tim. 1:19-20: If one does wrong and experiences guilt he may try to solve his conscience problem by denying his faith, or justifying his actions.
		3. Acts 8:22; I Jn. 1:9: The real solution to the problem of sinful guilt in the life of a Christian is repentance, confession and prayer!
	4. One who keeps the faith and abides by truth will have a good conscience!

#### Problem: A Seared Conscience (I Tim. 4:1-2)

* 1. A cow may be branded with a hot iron. When the burn has healed there is no longer nerve response in the branded area.
	2. One may persist in a sinful practice until there is no more “nerve response” – i.e., the conscience does not “sound the alarm”! *There is no guilt or remorse.*
		1. Eph. 4:17-19: A person may sin until he gets “past feeling” (KJV).
		2. Vs. 19: “…having become callous…” = Sin without guilt.
	3. One with a seared conscience may live in:
		1. Heb. 6:4-6: Unfaithfulness to Christ and His church.
		2. I Cor. 5:1: Some immoral practice(s).
		3. I Tim. 4:1-4; II Tim. 4:3-4: False doctrine.
		4. I Tim. 4:3-4: An acceptance of restrictions God has never imposed on people. (Mt. 15:8-9)
	4. It is hard to bring one with a “seared conscience” back to God.
	5. One with a seared conscience will not repent and ask for forgiveness.
	6. One may become so callous to sin that they no longer feel any shame or guilt!

## Conclusion

1. Timothy was charged to live faithfully and to keep a good conscience. *(I Tim. 1:18-19)*
	1. I Jn. 3:20-21: One who is condemned in his own heart is surely condemned of the Lord.
2. The conscience of a Christian is not cowardly. It gives him a measure of courage and comfort.
	1. I Tim. 1:18: “Fight the good fight.” Cowards don’t fight, they run.
	2. II Tim. 4:7: Paul could say with confidence he fought the good fight.
	3. Was Paul a coward, or was he courageous? *(II Cor. 11)*
3. Christians need to have the courage to maintain a good conscience!
	1. It takes courage to take a stand and not sin along with others.
	2. It takes courage to live in such a way that you can say you have a blameless conscience before God and man! (Acts 24:16)
4. Make right decisions in order to maintain a good conscience before God and men!
5. If you are not a Christian, you need to be. Repent and be baptized!
6. If a Christian in error, can you say you have a good conscience? Repent & be renewed.
7. Whatever your requests, let them be made known ***NOW*** while we stand & sing!