

## Tuesday's Touch ...#15

...from Pastor Ed ...May 5, 2009

### **Guilt & Conscience**

*For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins. ... Hebrews 10:1-4*

*...how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? Hebrews 9:14*

*Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Hebrews 10:19*

**G**uilt may motivate one to flee to the cross, but it must never be allowed to dwell beneath the cross. Our conscious guiltiness before a holy God for our permeating sin provides for us a mighty impetus to cast ourselves into the shelter of the Savior's arms. His blood and righteousness alone can cleanse and justify us. But the forensic evidence that we have been justified by Christ is that there should be "no more consciousness of sins." The thunderings of the law and the continual sacrifices for sin reminding us of our guilt must come to an end in Christ. He has by one sacrifice for sin forever perfected forever those who are being sanctified (Heb.10:12-14).

For that reason, beneath the cross, and beyond, guilt must cease to be at the helm of our souls. Conscience, though it may be weak, bruised, or severely distorted, must be renewed according to the truth in Christ. For those of us who have been deeply rooted in legalistic, or law-oriented religion, this can be a difficult and sometimes painful process, as it was for those early Jewish converts. Conscience must be honored even when it is distorted or misinformed (1Corinth.8; 10:25-31; Rom.14). But the liberating process of being set free by the truth must proceed unto the victory won in the active obedience and atoning death of Christ.

*How important it is, then, to be growing in the atmosphere of the grace and the knowledge of Christ our Lord (2 Peter 3:18)! The shepherds among us must be lovingly, consistently, and firmly leading the sheep through green pastures and by still waters, restoring their souls. It is far too easy to resort to the religious cattle prod of guilt to drive the flock in the desired direction. Because of this many sheep have become masochistic, never feeling "ministered to" unless they are being whipped! This is a strange and distorted gospel.*

*We well know that the rebellious nature of the natural man will tolerate no restraint, not even the loving bonds of Christ. But those regenerated by the power of the Gospel truly love God and hunger and thirst after His righteousness. This hungering and thirsting can only be satisfied by the Living Bread from heaven and the Living Water flowing from within. This righteousness is nothing less than the beautiful blossoming fruit of the manifold witness of Christ's own character within. On the other hand, the fruit of guilt-motivation is nothing more than cheap plastic ornaments hung upon dead branches.*

*Great Perfector of the Saints,*

*Forgive us for every false ornament of righteousness we have tried to hang on ourselves or others in your name. Forgive us for exalting the guilty conscience high as an instrument of righteousness. As we rightly weep over our remaining corruption, may our grief be because we are not yet conformed to your image, and not because of the coals of fire heaped upon a guilty conscience by the threatenings of the law. As we behold you, change us from glory to glory.*

*Abiding in Grace,*

*Amen*

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