

The Walk of Faith

Lesson 3: What if I believe, but my conscience is still not at peace?

Read Heb 10.16-23; Isa 26.1-4

- The point of this lesson is *to encourage us to actually rest in the truths of God concerning Christ's work for us and the Father's acceptance of us in light of it.*

I. **O you of little faith!** Mt 6.30; 8.26; 16.8

- A. Guilt comes from the broken law and from the apprehension of the punishment deserved. But Christ restored the law to its dignity by His hearty delight in it and joyful submission to it on earth; and He made it infinitely honorable by obeying it perfectly and showing it to be right, good, and holy. And He did all this for all those who put their faith in Him. How can we believe this and still be under a sense of guilt?
1. The punishment for our sins was laid on Him and He suffered all that was due to us as our atoning sacrifice. How can we believe this and yet fear that Justice will still punish us?
 2. A debtor wouldn't fear being arrested if his surety paid the sum and he had the receipt of it in his hand. And a felon with a pardon in his hand would greatly dishonor its signatory if he lived in constant dread of being arrested and suffering for his crime.
 3. Likewise, if you've confessed your sins to God and trust in Christ's atoning work, yet still walk in guilt of sin and fear of punishment, then it's because either you don't believe in the person and work of Christ for believing sinners, Isa 53.4-6; or you don't believe the record of it in Scripture, Jn 3.16
- B. So consider what you doubt:
1. Has Jesus made full atonement for sin and brought in an everlasting righteousness? Rom 3.23-26
 2. Has the Father demonstrated again and again, His perfect delight in His person and His infinite satisfaction with His work? Isa 53.12; Mt 3.17; Acts 2.32-33; 5.30-32
 3. Can God's Word be broken? Can His promise fail? 1Jn 5.10; Num 23.19
 - a) The Father says: everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved, Joel 2.32
 - b) The Son says: whoever comes to me shall be saved and never cast out, Jn 6.37
 - c) The Spirit says, let the one who desires, take the water of life without price, Rev 22.17
 4. Are these sayings not true? Is He who makes them untrustworthy or unfaithful?
 - a) If doubts remain, nothing can relieve them but to continue to read and hear the Word of God, which is no lie, and repeatedly entrust your whole self to it, Ps 22.5

II. **O you of unsteady faith!** How is the peace of God to be kept ruling in the conscience? The same way it was received at the first.

- A. Your peace with God came by faith and will ever be strengthened by faith. Peace was made by casting yourself upon Christ and believing that He shed His blood for you, Rom 5.1; Eph 1.7-9. When doubts return, you must return in faith to the same Fountain and have the atoning blood applied again to the conscience, Heb 9.14; 1Jn 1.7, 9; 2.1-2
- B. This is the unchangeable and unalterable testimony of God: that believing in Christ will always bring the same cleansing virtue and keep the conscience purged from the guilt of sin.
1. If guilt ever troubles our conscience, then it's only because *unbelief* has crept in, not because God has withdrawn His peace. Unbelief has us questioning either 1) that the blood of Jesus actually does cleanse from all sin or 2) that the Scripture testimony about it is absolutely trustworthy. For guilt comes in by one of these 2 doors: Do you doubt the virtue of Christ's blood concerning your sin, or the truth of God's testimony regarding it?

- C. It's your privilege to be comforted by resorting daily to the royal charter of grace and the storehouse of divine promises. Jesus has made peace by the blood of His cross and if you believe what the God of peace says, then His peace should always rule in your heart. On God's part, all things are well ordered and sure, all things regarding your peace are unalterably fixed and settled. Any wavering is on *your* part.
1. So if we're unsettled, then what's the cause?
 - a) Is it the fact that you still find sin dwelling and working within you, or that you see how weak your faith and other graces are? —Have you forgotten that Christ's blood cleansed you from the guilt of Adam's sin and that Christ's faith and graces were strong for you?
 - b) Is it because your peace ebbs and flows that you doubt its genuineness? —That should humble you, but it shouldn't discourage you; because God's taken charge of both you and your peace. He keeps both by His almighty power, Phil 4.6-10. You're as safe in God's hands at the lowest ebb as at the highest tide. In other words, your *sense* of your peace with God may vary, but *He* who is your Peace never varies. Let this stay your mind on God and keep guilt out of your conscience, even when you walk in darkness and have no light.
 - c) "Search and examine yourself: Do you understand what's revealed concerning the way of peace, what was covenanted in the counsel of the Eternal Three, and what has been done in consequence of that counsel? Jesus Christ is the great Peacemaker. He has made peace through the blood of his cross. The Father sent him and gave him to be a covenant of peace for sinners, to fulfill for them all righteousness and to be their atoning sacrifice. The Father has seen the work which He gave Him to do and has joyfully accepted it. He's perfectly satisfied with it and therefore is infinitely delighted with Him and with all His people. He would now be known by the high style and title of the God of Peace. Fury is not in him to those whom He sees in the Beloved. He is a Father, fully and forever reconciled to all His children in Jesus Christ. He loves them as He loves Him, with every kind of feeling of the most tender parent. And He *will* bring everyone of them to partake with their glorified Head of all the blessings of His everlasting love."
 2. If your mind is enlightened to understand and receive this truth, then why is it not effectual in your conscience? Can you plead this truth before God on behalf of your own soul? Can you be as pleased as the Father is with what Christ has done for you? He raised Him from the dead to show His pleasure, and can you not raise your faith from its doubts? If the peace of God rules in His heart toward you, shouldn't it rule in your heart as well?
 3. Remember, this is your *privilege*! And the greatest honor you could put on the evidence of God being reconciled to you in Christ, is to believe it and make no appeal from it. Let your conscience speak God's words after Him. Let it plead your discharge from guilt under the seal of Heaven and stop the mouth of your unbelief with those words written in gold letters in the royal charter of grace: "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, for all their sins are forgiven; they are justified before God; and God says He will remember their sins and iniquities no more." These are the words of *immutable* truth. They *cannot* be broken. —Therefore honor them by believing them! Trust in them and don't be afraid! The more faith you put in them, the more peace they'll pour into the soul, until your conscience agrees with God and ceases striving.
 4. Whatever you see in yourself, whatever corruptions, failures, weaknesses, run to God's Word and rest again in Christ's work for you; because this will make your trials work *for you* by settling you and bringing you nearer to God.

- a) God's friendship with you is eternally fixed. Let your conscience rest in that and walk in the peace of that eternal friendship.
 - b) Set out daily with a humble boldness to walk with your God. And to guide you in that way, keep to His Word. Read it. Pray over it. Believe it. Trust in the blood of Jesus to cleanse you from all sin. Enter boldly by the way opened for sinners by His cross. Depend on His intercession to keep you in step with the Spirit. Be entirely satisfied with Him as the Way of salvation and the Life of peace and seek no other Help.
5. Let us, then, learn to pray this prayer: "O God the Holy Spirit, I beseech you to make practical to my heart what you have revealed in Scripture of the Father's love. Deliver me from guilt and condemnation by the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus. Apply it *effectually*. Apply it *continually*. Help me to believe with more comfort in my conscience and with more steadfastness in my walk that His blood does indeed cleanse me from *all* my sins. O blessed Spirit, carry on your work in my soul! Lead me from faith to faith that I may at all times have the freedom to enter within the veil to a reconciled God and Father, and may be able to maintain peace with Him against all doubts and fears, against all corruptions and enemies. O teach me to draw near to Him with a true heart, steadfastly persuaded of His love, and in the full assurance of faith in Jesus. This is your gracious office. Fulfill it in me, that my heart may be sprinkled from an evil conscience and my body washed with pure water. Let me find grace sufficient for me, for Jesus' sake, to whom, with you O Father, and the eternal Spirit, three Persons in one God, be equal honor and glory forever and ever. Amen."