

GUILT AND GUILT FEELINGS

Text: John 8:36

INTRO: One of the primary causes of mental anguish & turmoil in our troubled society is guilt and/or guilt feelings. The Bible recognizes that we have all sinned & fallen short of God's will, but the Bible also makes known the solution to our guilt problems. It tells us how we can have forgiveness of all our sins, experience inner peace, &, most important of all, peace with God.

I. YOUR CONSCIENCE IS YOUR FRIEND.

A. God has put within each person a conscience which prompts us to do what we have been taught is right & rebukes us when we have done what we have been taught is wrong.

B. Conscience is not an infallibly safe guide. It can only prompt us correctly to the extent that we have been taught correctly, but it is never wise or safe to ignore one's conscience.

Rom 14:22-23, Do you have faith? Have it to yourself before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves. But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because he does not eat from faith; for whatever is not from faith is sin.

C. A person can over-ride his conscience till it becomes seared or hardened & that person becomes past feeling.
1 Tim 4:2; Heb 3:13; Eph 4:19
(trans: seared, hardened thru ? of sin, past feeling)

NOTE: This may cause the feelings of guilt to go away, but it is no solution to the problem of guilt. The guilt is still there & must be faced in the final judgment.

II. THE SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM OF GUILT.

A. God has provided for the forgiveness or remission of sins upon certain conditions.
Acts 2:36-38

B. Note the figures used to illustrate the sinner's new relationship with God after his sins have been forgiven.

1. He has been born again.
JN 3:3-5; Tit 3:5; Rom 6:3-5
2. He has been adopted into God's family.
Rom 8:15; Gal. 4:4-7
3. He has been grafted onto the stock of
God's Israel. Rom 11:22-24

C. God has also made provision for the forgiveness of sins committed by those who have been born into His spiritual family. They have abundant--but not automatic forgiveness. Acts 8:22; 1 JN 1:9

III. SOME CONTRASTS BETWEEN THE O.T. & N.T. SYSTEMS.

A. The O.T. was a system of law, the N.T. is a system of grace. John 1:17

For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them." (Gal 3:10).

1. Of course, the O.T. system of law did contain some grace. EX 33:17, "Moses found grace..."
2. The N.T. system of grace contains law.
Rom 8:2; Gal 6:2; JS 1:25

B. Sacrifices under the O.T. were temporary in their effect. That of Christ is permanent.
HEBREWS 10:1-4, 9-14

C. Under the O.T. system the conscience of the sinner was only temporarily eased. Under the N.T. the conscience is purged & purified.

Psalm 51:3, "My sin is always before me."

READ HEBREWS 9:6-12; 10:1-4

IV. TAKING GOD AT HIS WORD.

A. God's word is completely trustworthy.
God is not a man that He should lie, nor a son of man that He should repent. Has He

said, & will not do it? Or has He spoken, & will not make it good? (Num 23:19)

And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor relent. For He is not man, that He should relent. (1 Sam 15:29) Titus 1:2; Heb. 6:18, etc.

B. Now, note God's promises. MK 16:16; Acts 2:38; 1 JN 1:9
For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness & their sins & their lawless deeds I will remember no more. (Heb 8:12; 10:17).

C. Note what Jesus does to our sins when we obey His gospel.

1. Takes them away, John 1:29
2. Remits them, Acts 2:38
3. Blots them out, Acts 3:19
4. Washes them away, Acts 22:16
5. Purges them, Heb. 1:3
6. Forgives them, Eph. 1:7
7. Cleanses them, 1 John 1:7

D. Let us note that our hope of heaven does not rest on our own goodness. Two common errors have their basis in the same mistake: "I'm not good enough to become a Christian," and "I'm good enough already." There are 2 eternal destinies. The difference will not be that some sinned & others did not. It will not be that some committed "big" sins & the others "little" sins. It will not be that some committed many sins & others few sins. The difference will be that some met the conditions of forgiveness & others did not. When we meet His conditions, God blots out our sins, remembers them no more-& we can afford to forgive ourselves & experience peace of mind because we have established peace with God.

West Chester, PA, June 18, 1985
La Porte, TX, August 5, 1985 (meeting)
Exton, PA, August 11, 1985
Jonestown, TX, September 18, 1987
Shiloh, Mexia, TX, July 15, 1990
Washington, NJ, April 5, 1992 (meeting)
Wrightsville, PA, April 12, 1992 (meeting)

Shiloh, Mexia, TX, March 31, 1996
Susquehanna, Marietta, PA, October 13, 2002