

THE NECESSITY OF CONFESSING SIN

Acts 24:16 I myself always strive to have a good conscience towards God and men.

Romans 9:1 My conscience also bearing witness in the Holy Spirit.

“He that covereth his transgressions shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall obtain mercy” (Proverbs 28:13). Let us be those who confess the sins which we committed in the past. Let us apologize to men if we have sinned against them. Let us confess to God if we have offended Him. Otherwise we may suffer loss in the future.

The Scope of Confessing Sin

The scope of confession is governed by the scope of sin. Do not confess more than the scope of sin, nor confess less than its scope. If the scope of my sin is that I have offended God, I must confess to God as my scope of confession. But if I sin against both God or a certain brother, then my scope of confession must include both God and that brother. It is therefore unwise to confess openly to the public what I have sinned against God and against another person. In many revival meetings, people are asked to confess their sins in public. This is a mistake, for it only defiles many minds. Confess to one person if the sin is against one person; confess to five persons, if the sin is against five persons. On the other hand, the scope of confession should not be less than the scope of sin. If I sin against God and also against another brother, it is not acceptable just to confess to God and not to that brother.

The Blood of the Lamb

First, “they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb.” Victory in spiritual warfare is based upon the blood of the Lamb. The blood is not only for forgiveness and salvation, but further, it is the basis by which we overcome Satan. Some people may think that the blood is not of so much value to those who have grown in the Lord. They suppose that some may grow to the extent where they go beyond their need of the blood. We must emphatically say that there is no such thing! No person can grow to such an extent that he surpasses his need for the blood. God’s Word says, “they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb.”

The major activity of Satan against Christians is to accuse them. Is Satan a murderer? Yes. Is he a liar and a tempter? Yes. Is he one who attacks us? Yes. But this is not all. His chief work is to accuse. Revelation 12:10 says: “. . . for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, who accuseth them before our God day and night.” We see here that Satan accuses the brethren day and night. Not only is he the accuser before God, but he is also the accuser in our conscience,

and his accusations can cause us to become weak and completely powerless. He likes to accuse people to such an extent that they consider themselves useless and thus lose all their ground for fighting with him. We are not saying that there is no need for us to deal with sin. We must have a keen sense toward sin, but we should not accept the accusations of Satan.

Once a child of God accepts Satan's accusations, all day long he will feel that he is wrong. When he arises early in the morning, he feels that he is wrong. When he kneels down to pray, he feels that he is wrong and does not even believe that God will answer his prayers. When he would speak a word in the meeting, he feels that it is no use, for he himself is not right. When he would give an offering to the Lord, he wonders why he should offer anything, for how could God accept an offering from such a person as he. The main concern of this kind of Christian is not how glorious and victorious the Lord Jesus is, but how evil and worthless they are in every situation. From morning to evening they are consumed with the thought of their own worthlessness. Whether they are working, resting, walking, reading the Scriptures or praying, there is not a single moment but they are considering how worthless they are. This is the accusation of Satan. If Satan can keep us in such a condition, he has won the victory. People in this state are powerless before Satan. No one who accepts accusations can be an overcomer before him. Many times when we are engrossed with the thought of our own evil, it is easy for us to mistakenly think this to be Christian humility, not realizing that we are but suffering the harmful effect of Satan's accusations. It is true that when we sin we must confess and deal with it. But there is another lesson which we must learn. We must learn not to look upon ourselves, but to gaze only upon the Lord Jesus. To be conscious of self everyday from morning till evening is a sickly condition. It is the result of our accepting the accusations of Satan.

In the consciences of some of the Lord's children there is little feeling toward sin. This kind of people are not of much spiritual use. However, there are many of God's children whose consciences are so weak that they have no real awareness of the work of the Lord Jesus. If we ask them what particular sin they sense at this time, they cannot point to any. Yet they always have the feeling that they are wrong. They always feel that they are weak and worthless. Whenever they think of themselves they lose all their peace and joy. They have accepted the accusations of Satan. Every time Satan gives us this kind of feeling we are weakened and can no longer resist him.

We must not, therefore, lightly esteem the accusations of Satan. His chief work is to accuse us, and he does it day and night without ceasing. He accuses us in our conscience as well as before God till our conscience becomes so weak that it cannot be strengthened.

In the daily life and work of a Christian, his conscience is of great importance. The Apostle Paul told us in 1 Corinthians 8 that if one's conscience is defiled he perishes. This perishing does not mean eternal perishing, but that that person can no more be built up. He has been so weakened that he has become worthless. 1 Timothy 1 says that a man who thrusts away his conscience makes shipwreck concerning the faith. A ship which is wrecked cannot sail.

Therefore, whether a Christian can stand before God or not depends upon whether he has any offense in his conscience. Once he accepts the accusations of Satan, his conscience is offended, and once his conscience is offended, he cannot proceed in his service nor fight any more for God. We must realize, therefore, that Satan's main work is to accuse us, and it is this work we must overcome.

How can we overcome the accusations of Satan? The voice from heaven tells us: "They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb." The blood is the basis of victory, and it is the instrument to overcome Satan. Satan may accuse us, but we can answer that the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses us from all sin (1 John 1:7). "All sin" means any sin, whether it be great or small. The blood of God's Son cleanses us from all of them. Satan may tell us that we are wrong, but we have the blood of the Lord Jesus. The blood of the Lord Jesus can cleanse all our many sins away. This is the Word of God: The blood of Jesus, God's Son, cleanses us from all sin.

We must not only reject the accusations which are without cause, but we must also reject all the accusations which have cause. When God's children have done something wrong, they need only the blood of Jesus, His Son, not the accusations of Satan. It is the precious blood which is needed for sin, not accusation. God's Word never says that after we have sinned we need accusation. The only problem is whether we have confessed our sin or not. If we have confessed it, then what more can be said? If we have sinned and do not confess it, then we deserve to be accused. But where there is no sin, there is no cause for accusation. If we have sinned and we have confessed it, we should not be accused.

If you have sinned, you can bow and confess it to God. Immediately the blood of the Lord Jesus will cleanse you. Do not think that if you consider more how sinful you are you will be a little more holy, or that if you have more feeling toward your sin you will be more holy. No. We only must ask ourselves one thing: How do I treat the blood of the Lord Jesus? It is true that we have sinned, but His blood cleanses us from all sin. "All sin" means great sin or small sin, recollected sin or forgotten sin, visible sin or invisible sin, sin which we think can be forgiven and sin which we do not think can be forgiven—all are included in this "all." The blood of Jesus, God's Son, does not wash away one or two sins, or even many sins, but it cleanses us from *all* sins.

We admit that we have sin. We do not say that we are without sin. But regardless of that, we do not accept the accusations of Satan. Before God we are clean, because we have the precious blood. We should not believe in the accusations more than we believe in the precious blood. When we commit sin, we do not glorify God, but when we do not trust the precious blood, we dishonor Him all the more. It is a shameful thing to sin, but not to believe in the precious blood is even more shameful. We must learn to trust in the blood of the Lamb.

Romans 5:9 says, ". . . being now justified by his blood." When many people come into the Lord's presence, they have no peace in their heart. Added to this they have a feeling of

worthlessness and of being wrong within. Why is this? It is because they have a false hope. They expect that they will have something positive in themselves to offer to God. Then, when they discover that in themselves they do not have anything positive to offer, the accusations come. The accusation is like this: “A person like you will never have anything good to offer to God.” But we must remember that originally we possessed no positive goodness before God anyway. There was nothing good in ourselves that we could offer to God. We could only present one thing to Him—the blood. We could only be justified by the blood. We do not have any positive righteousness in ourselves. We become righteous only because of that righteousness which we receive through redemption. Every time we come to the throne of grace we can look to Him for grace. It is a throne of grace, not a throne of righteousness. Every time we come before God, our only qualification is that we have been redeemed, not that we have advanced in our Christian life. No Christian can ever reach the stage where he can say, “I have been doing pretty well recently; now I have the boldness to pray.” No. Every time we come before God, our only ground, our only position, is based upon the blood. We must realize that no amount of spiritual growth can substitute for the effectiveness of the blood. Not one spiritual experience can ever replace the work of the blood. Even if someone should become as spiritual as the Apostle Paul, the Apostle John, or the Apostle Peter, he would still need the blood to stand before God.

Sometimes when we have sinned Satan comes to accuse us, and sometimes when we have not sinned Satan still comes to accuse us. Sometimes it is not a problem of whether we have sinned or not, but a problem of not having a positive righteousness to offer to God; so Satan accuses us. However, we must be clear: we come into God’s presence only because of the blood, not because of anything else. Since we have been cleansed by the blood and justified by the blood, we are under no obligation whatever to accept the accusations of Satan.

The precious blood is the basis for spiritual warfare. If we do not know the value of the blood, we cannot fight. Once our conscience is weakened, we are finished. Therefore, if we do not maintain a blameless and clean conscience, we have no way to deal with Satan. Satan can use thousands of reasons in his accusations against us. If we accept them we will fall. But when Satan speaks to us, we can reply to all his reasons with the one answer of the blood. There is not a single reason which cannot be answered by the blood. Spiritual warfare requires a conscience without offense; and the blood alone can give us such a conscience.

Hebrews 10:2 says: “. . . the worshippers, having been once cleansed, would have had no more consciousness of sins.” When a Christian’s conscience has no more sense of sin, it is because of the blood. Once we stand on the ground of the blood, once we believe in the blood, Satan can no longer work upon us. We often like to reason that because we have sinned, we can no longer fight. But the Lord knows that we are sinful, so He has prepared the blood. The Lord has a way for a sinful man, because the Lord has the blood. But He has no way for one who willingly receives Satan’s accusations. Anyone who accepts the accusations of Satan denies the

power of the blood. No one who believes in the precious blood can at the same time receive Satan's accusations. Either one or the other of these must go. If we accept the accusations, the blood has to go; if we accept the blood, the accusations have to go.

The Lord Jesus is the High Priest and Mediator for us (see Hebrews 2:17-18; 4:14-16; 7:20-28; 8:6; 9:15; 1 John 2:1). He is always serving in this position—the High Priest and the Mediator. The purpose of His serving is to keep us from Satan's accusations. It takes only a moment of time for man to receive Him as Savior, but it is a life-long matter to face the accusations of Satan. The word "mediator" in Greek means "an appointed defender." The Lord is our Mediator, our Defender. The Lord speaks for us. The question is, do we stand on the side of the Mediator or on the side of the accuser? It would be ridiculous if we should believe the words of the accuser while our Mediator is in the very act of defending us. If an attorney was continually proving that a defendant was not guilty and the defendant persisted in believing the accuser, would that not be quite absurd? Oh, may we see that the Lord Jesus is our Mediator and that He is defending us. May we see that the blood is the basis for us to deal with Satan. If we realize the value of the blood, there will be a great increase of peaceful and joyful Christians on the earth today.

"They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb." How precious are these words! The brethren overcame him not because of their merit, their advancement, or their experience. They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb. Whenever accusations come from Satan, we need to deal with them by the blood. Once we accept the blood, Satan's power will be nullified. All that we are depends on the blood, and we need the blood every day. Just as we depended upon the blood and trusted in the blood on the day we were saved, so we must continue to depend upon the blood and trust in the blood from that day on. The blood is our only foundation. God desires to deliver us from many senseless accusations. He wants to break these chains. We must never feel that we are being humble by receiving accusations day after day. We must learn to overcome these accusations. If we do not overcome accusations, we can never be the overcomers. The overcomers must know the value of the blood. Although we do not know the immense value of the blood, we can still say to the Lord, "O Lord, apply the blood on my behalf according to Your evaluation of it." It is not according to what we realize of its value, but according to the Lord's evaluation of the blood that we deal with the power of Satan.

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