“Forgive Us as We Forgive Others”

1. Importance of a ‘Clear Conscience’ before God/man
   1. **The knowledge of doing good or bad is hinged on a system that is seated somewhere within us**.  When we do something not quite praiseworthy, we end up having questions in our heart- more like an inner critic (judge).  This system in our souls was created by God to help check every act of ours.  It raises alarms when we act unbecomingly.  This internal system within us is the CONSCIENCE.
      1. have a clean conscience; Feel free of guilt or responsibility.
      2. A clear conscience means a conscience void of the guilt of a wrong done.  This simple meaning can be extended to both God and man.  With a clear conscience, we can stand before God and men with no accusation coming to obstruct our relationship with them.
      3. A clear conscience is something to be pursued hard by everyone.  Here is a simple analogy.  Look at our normal human bodies.  When we pick up something hot, for example, some nerves send signals to the brain, so there is a pain sensation that makes us drop the hot object.  Some persons with certain medical conditions, such as Hansen’s disease (otherwise known as leprosy), cannot have this pain sensation.  The fact that we can have similar sensations by our conscience is a great value.  When these sensations are lost, it only means one thing- a hardened or dead conscience. e.g. cow walks same path – hardens the road – seared conscience – hardened conscience – evil conscience There is GREAT value in a clean/clear conscience
   2. **Benefits of a clear/clean conscience are**;
      1. ...we can freely fellowship with our creator without feeling unworthy.  A heart that feels condemned cannot enjoy confidence in fellowship.  We can freely fellowship without being worried about our acceptability.  It is such a beautiful feeling having to be clear in our conscience when we stand to worship.  With this free fellowship, we can clearly hear the voice that guides us and instructs us on how to lead our lives and do what is acceptable.
      2. ...a clear conscience means there will not be anything whatsoever standing against our relationships with man.  We will take it from there.  This implies that we can lead a happy life and enjoy exciting relationships with family, friends, colleagues, and the world at large.  A happy life will make you productive and progressive in life, which will lead to lots of beautiful happenings in your life.
2. How can you have a clear conscience?Having a clear conscience is a responsibility that depends on us heavily.  No one will do that for you.  In the same vein, going about with guilt, believing that time will make it go away will not make you guiltless.  It only reveals the fact that your conscience is active.  We will carefully look into some general steps towards having a clear conscience.
   1. **The first of them is identifying the exact feeling of guilt and its cause; name it and admit you did it**
      1. It’s not ‘my little issue or problem’ – Call it what it is – Name the SIN
      2. If you’re feeling guilty, you may be tempted to make excuses or deny that you did anything wrong. Forgiveness is impossible if you don’t admit you did something wrong AND always making excuses
         1. You may think, “I guess maybe I shouldn’t have lied, but I had a really good reason and it was a small lie.” You are trying to justify what you did rather than admitting to it.
      3. Begin by praying, “Father, I took $5 from my brother without asking him for it.” You have named the sin (stealing) and you have taken the responsibility for it without making an excuse.
   2. **Tell God that you know what you did was wrong.** Once you have named what you did, it’s important to recognize that it was wrong.
      1. It’s possible to say what you’ve done but to not believe that you were wrong to do it. Admitting you did it is pointless if you do not admit that you know it was wrong
      2. You will not receive clear conscience if you say, “I’ve been stealing from my work place, but I don’t see anything wrong with it.” You must recognize what you did as sin, as something God is unhappy about.
      3. Why was it wrong? Who is it hurting?
   3. **Say that you are sorry for what you did.** It is still not enough to say what you did and admit that it was wrong. Say you are sorry. Be sincerely sorry for the wrong, and let that regret come through in what you say to God. It’s important that you are actually remorseful when you say you are sorry.
      1. Asking forgiveness from God is not like when you say sorry to a brother but you really don’t mean it. It must be sincerely from your heart.
      2. Say something like, “I know that what I did was wrong, and I feel truly bad for it. I’m sorry that I broke our relationship. I’m sorry for sinning against you.”
      3. **Sometimes we need a little assistance when we don’t want to be sorry or to feel sorry because we don’t want to turn from our sin. We need the Gift of Repentance**
         1. God designed us to feel remorse over sin in order to produce repentance that leads to victory. This leaves us with no regret. 2 Corinthians 7:10 TPT
         2. God...take this world from me, help me hate what you hate. Take the world from me, I don’t want it anymore. Forgiveness.
         3. God...give me a heart to want to change and do what is right...correct me of any error and sinfulness in my life and set my course towards your divine nature and your heavenly course. I yield to your correction, that I may live in freedom and walk in oneness w/ You and people
3. **Now it is time to move towards ‘Asking for Forgiveness.’**
   1. **Pray about what you’re feeling.** You must always be honest when you are asking for forgiveness. If you believe that God knows your heart anyway, there is no sense in lying to him. Tell him the guilt you feel for your sin, and that being separated from him or others has made you sad, empty, guilty.
      1. There is nothing worse than ‘Sinful Anxiety’ shame, guilt, fear
      2. Say, “God, I feel sick to my stomach because I know I have caused you pain.” It can be good to pray aloud to God so that you are saying specifically what is on your mind as opposed to only thinking it
      3. Jesus our High Priest..
         1. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin.**16**Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. Hebrews 4:15-16 NIV
         2. Jesus ...become like his people in every way, in order to be their faithful and merciful High Priest in his service to God, so that the people's sins would be forgiven. Hebrew 2:17 GNT
   2. **Ask God to forgive you for what you’ve done.** Just as you would with other people, after saying you are sorry you must ask to be forgiven. There is no special prayer you have to pray to earn forgiveness from God. All you have to do is ask him to forgive you, through Jesus Christ, and believe that he will forgive you
      1. Say to God, “I denied knowing you to my friend. It was wrong and cowardly for me to do that. I’m sorry I didn’t tell him about your love for us. Please forgive me for my weakness in that moment."
      2. You do not need to plead, beg, or repeat yourself over and over. Asking God one time, with a genuine heart, is all you have to do.
   3. **Tell God that you believe He has forgiven you.** Belief and forgiveness go hand in hand. It’s no good to ask for forgiveness but not believe God will forgive you. God says that when you ask him to forgive you with sincere hearts that is He is faithful to forgive. Tell yourself you believe Him and tell God you believe Him.
      1. 1 John 1:9 tells you that, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” Say this scripture to God *and believe it*.
      2. It’s important to remember that forgiven sins are forgotten. Hebrews 8:12 says, "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.”
      3. God forgives and forgets
         1. I have made mistakes before and been forgiven but never given another chance again
         2. And then he says, “I will not remember their sins and evil deeds any longer.” Hebrews 10:17 GNT
         3. He has removed our sins as far **from** us as the east is from the west. Psalms 103:12 NLT
      4. Enemy will try to make you think God is Angry w/U. God is not angry w/you. We think that God is angry w/ us so, we are insecure to come to Him. Isaiah 54...the rainbow...rainbow of grace
   4. **Worship and Gratitude towards God for Forgiveness.**
      1. Many years ago I had a vision of people taking Christ off the cross. It was the most beautiful act of worship described in the bible: They took the cross out of the hole and laid it on the ground with so much care. They so delicately took the nails out of his hands and feet, freeing him from the cross. So gently lifted his body and laid him on a linen sheet. The took his body to a special place as they wiped the dirt, sweat and blood from His body. They washed his body down with warm water, cleaning the cuts and bruises, knowing all these wounds were put on his body by their sin...what an act of worship.
4. Moving forward after Forgiveness
   1. **Sometimes this can be hard to do because your feel so Guilt, Shame and Condemnation**
      1. Word teaches us that He has **Purged Conscience of Sin**...
         1. Purge (Rid) your conscience from dead works. Romans 8:1
         2. The Holy Spirit has purged my conscious of sin... He had by Himself **purge**d our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high...Hebrews 1:3 (NKJV)
         3. ....worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins Hebrews 10:2 (KJV)
      2. In most cases God forgives you much quicker than you forgive yourself
      3. Cleanse Conscience from dead works...I have to pay for it.
         1. *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)*
   2. **Sometimes there is ...So much Condemnation!!!**
      1. Paul murdered...it haunted him...he saw vision heard voices,
      2. Many things in Paul’s life was a trigger for condemnation
      3. He penned... Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,**2**because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death Romans 8:1-2 NIV
         1. Three deep roots Shame/Guilt/ deepest root is Condemnation
      4. Jesus was beaten so you don’t beat yourself up; No need to beat yourself up, Jesus was already beat up for you.
         1. We think we have to pay – Jesus’ already did – that would be double payment
   3. **Realize that God is not angry with you anymore**; I used to think that God stood over me with a ball bat; always angry, frustrated and disappointed with me, BUT HE ISN’T.
      1. In a burst of anger I turned my face away for a little while. But with everlasting love I will have compassion on you,” says the Lord, your Redeemer. **9**“Just as I swore in the time of Noah, that I would never again let a flood cover the earth, so now I swear that I will never again be angry and punish you. Isaiah 54:8-9 NLT
      2. Jesus called God his Father every place in the bible except when Jesus was on the cross...Jesus said, My God, why have you forsaken me...
      3. God’s wrath and anger was but a MOMENT and it was placed on His son Jesus on the cross.
         1. He *was* wounded for our transgressions, *He was* bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace *was* upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed Isaiah 53:5 NKJV
   4. **Sometimes we sabotage our future** because we can’t forgive ourselves, we think we have to pays for it...we don’t feel worthy to have something good happen to us or that we don’t deserve happiness
      1. Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.  
         **11**Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me.  
         **12**Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me. **13**Then I will teach transgressors your ways, so that sinners will turn back to you...Psalm 51:10-13 NIV
      2. We can move on Past our SINS AND FAILURES...GOD still has a great plan for our lives, roses will bloom again...you will get through
   5. **Seek forgiveness from people you hurt by what you did.** Although sin ultimately breaks relationship with God, other people are often hurt, too. When you know that God has forgiven you, it’s important to seek forgiveness from others. Tell the person you are sorry you hurt them and ask them to forgive you
      1. Remember that you can’t make someone forgive you, and you can’t earn it from them. They will either accept that you are sorry for what you did and forgive you, or they won’t. Don’t pester them if they refuse to forgive. You can’t make them change.
      2. Once you have apologized and asked for someone’s forgiveness, you must release yourself from the guilt. Even if they don’t forgive you, you’ve done your part in seeking to make amends.
   6. **Turn away from your SIN**
      1. Once you are forgiven by God for your sin and by others for any hurt you caused, you must turn away from that sin. Make a conscious decision that you will not purposefully commit the same sin again after being forgiven.
         1. GOD help me to not return to the pig hole or the dog’s vomit
      2. There will be that lure – but God will make a way of escape
   7. **Try to keep from doing the same wrong thing again.** Part of your goal in following Christ is to move further from sin, and this takes committed work. You won’t stop sinning immediately, but if you work on it, you will grow stronger.
      1. In Matthew 5:48, God calls you to become perfect, as he is perfect. It’s a goal that you must work toward
      2. But remember Hebrews 10:17 For by that one offering he forever made perfect those who are **BEING made holy** Hebrews 10:17 NLT
      3. **Don’t say, “I’m never going to do this again” setting yourself up to fall.** Even if there is repeated failure...keep going...
         1. ...for though the **righteous** **fall** seven times, they rise again...Proverbs 24:16 NIV
         2. How many times God forgive – every time
         3. To fall from grace is when you quit believing that God will forgive you
      4. Not going to be perfect until rapture...Long for resurrection
   8. **Find people who can help you avoid repeated sins**.
      1. **Confess** your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results. James 5:16 NLT
5. Keeping a Clear or Clean Conscience w/People
   1. **Forgive as you want to be forgiven**; 
      1. But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins. Matthew 6:15 (NLT)
      2. How many times do I forgive? The story of the man that was forgiven but wouldn't forgive others Matthew 18:21-35
   2. **Set your will daily to forgive;** forgiveness is an act of THE WILL, it IS NOT an emotion.
      1. If you want to be forgiven, you must be willing to extend forgiveness to others.
      2. For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. (Matthew 6:14-15)
   3. In the world you will be offended: 5 steps when you encounter offense:
      1. Don’t curse it...Ask God what He is wanting to work in you
      2. Don’t Nurse it...Don’t be the victim
      3. Don’t Rehearse it...I should have said or done this or that
      4. BUT Disperse it...Give it to God and Bless/release the people that hurt you
      5. And God will reverse it.
   4. **Forgiveness is the key to health and healing**;
      1. When there isn’t forgiveness, the enemy robs your peace, leaving you without peace and the feeling that something is left undone, leaving you undone; it’s like you can’t move on
      2. When you forgive, the torment (pain, suffering, stress, awkwardness) leaves. The big ordeal which causes chaos begins to leave
         1. Paul said, “I bare the marks of God in my Body.” There is a scar but not an open wound – you have an experience that God took YOU THROUGH...You are OK