

Hebrews 10:2; also 9:14

The Savior Who Takes Sin So Far Away We Are No Longer Conscious of It

I. Our Text – Hebrews 10:1-2 and 9:14

A. Heb 10:1-2 - For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near. Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any **consciousness** of sins?

B. Heb 9:14 - how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our **conscience** from dead works to serve the living God.

II. Intro

A. The sacrifice that Christ offered when he offered himself for our sins accomplishes, according to our texts, two acts within our mind. I highlighted two words above which identify for us where in our life we can experience what Christ has done for us. The two words sound similar (conscience and conscious). They are derived from the same Latin roots. In the Greek they are both the same word^[1]. However, our translators use 2 different words as they relay what the text is saying to us.

1. The Latin etymology of the word means literally – “to know with” “Con” means “with” and “science” means “to know”. It is the same kind of break out in the Greek.

2. But the words in English have a slightly different spelling and meaning. The translators used two different words due to the context in which the word was used.

B. When we talk about our **conscience** we are talking about a knowledge that we have about ourselves and our actions which we simultaneously know that God knows as well. It boils down to this. Every one of us has a conscience that “knows with” God that we have done things we should not have done and failed to do things we should have done. God knows when we have sinned and in our innermost being we too know that we have sinned.

1. Our conscience is that inner voice that speaks to us when we are tempted to do something wrong and when we have done wrong it whispers in our ear to lead us along the right path and speaks against us when we go the wrong way.

2. Why do people lie? For the most part, people lie because they know they have done something they should not have. A lie is an attempt to escape the consequences of a bad act, and it is also a person's inward recognition that they did something wrong and now have to try and cover it up. People who lie know that they are lying the moment they lie. And that knowledge is not theirs alone. God also knows. It is a shared knowledge. That is what a conscience is.

3. Our conscience speaks to us when we do wrong – when we sin. What it is telling us is something we know and something God also knows. And deep down, we know that we both (us and God) know it together. The knowledge of our sin is a shared knowledge.

4. Now, when we know our sin with God, who is holy, then our conscience experiences guilt and shame. Our conscience also experiences guilt and shame when the knowledge of our sin is known to others, who are not holy as God is, but who we feel will judge us nonetheless for the wrong we have done. Once we get caught the knowledge of our sin is now shared with God and man. And it results in feelings of guilt and shame.

C. The other word that is used in our texts this morning is the word conscious or **consciousness**. It is very similar in its meaning to conscience. But in its context it emphasizes a different aspect of meaning. To be conscious is “to be awake”.

1. In our culture today we hear people talking about being “woke”. They are talking about being awake – roused from the sleep and lethargy and neglect of injustice. And then doing something about it.

2. When a person wakes up to the world around them it means that something has finally gotten through to them and they are ready to take action.

III. From our texts here is what Jesus has done in regard to our conscience and our consciousness when it comes to our sin.

A. When it comes to our conscience, the sacrifice of Jesus for our sins allows us to share a new knowledge with God. And that new knowledge is that Jesus Christ, being God and having a shared knowledge of our sin, took our sins to the cross where they met with the holiness and righteousness of God. And when that happened the wrath and judgment of our sins was poured out on Jesus so that our sins were justly and fully dealt with by Jesus upon the cross. And the Father was appeased and accepted this sacrifice – this payment for our sins.

1. The result is that we can now share a new knowledge about ourselves with God. The knowledge we now share – that we both

know – is that we are forgiven. Our sins have not just been covered, like they were in the Old Testament on Yom Kippur – the Day of Covering Sin. No! Now our sins are “taken away”. This taking away is something new.^[2] It is what Jesus accomplished for us by his death (Heb 10:4).

2. When we confess our sin to the Lord and trust in the sacrifice of Jesus to take away our sin – then we no longer share the knowledge of our sin with God. We now share the knowledge of our forgiveness – the removal of our sin – the cleansing of our sin with him. Our sin is gone. That is the knowledge we now share with him.

3. As a result our conscience is changed. It is no longer an “evil conscience” that condemns us and tries to cover our sin (Heb 10:22). It is rather a “good conscience” (Heb 13:18) which rejoices in forgiveness and a new honest relationship with our heavenly Father.

4. And there is also now no longer any **consciousness** of sin. That is what our text says. Here is how that happens. Prior to trusting Jesus to take away our sin our conscience spoke to us day after day about our sins. And day after day we suppressed it or mollified it with excuses or by blaming others for the sins we committed or minimizing our sin to the point where they did not trouble us too terribly much. We had a seared conscience (I Tim 4:2).

a. But then one day we, as the hymn says, “I woke, the dungeon flamed with light My chains fell off, my heart was free, I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.”^[3] The Holy Spirit “woke” us up to our sin. He brought our sin and guilt to the forefront of our thinking and lives, and we knew we had to do something about it.

b. He brought us to the point where we understood the gospel and asked Jesus to come and forgive us – to take away our sin.

c. And now that our sin is taken away - we are no longer conscious of our sin. It no longer troubles us. It is gone.

d. We have now been awakened – made conscious – of something else. Heb 13:18 – we have a clear conscience and are now awakened to “act honorably in all things”.

1) To love God

2) To love our neighbor

3) And actually live this way. Act honorably in all things. We seek to live for Christ and his kingdom.

B. Jesus comes into our life to change it. He comes to change our conscience. He comes to wake us up to the reality that we can be

forgiven of our sin and live differently. That is, we can live differently in our relationship with God and in our relationship with each other. Guilt and shame no longer dominate our lives. Instead forgiveness and reconciliation with God and man rule our life.

IV. I am reading a book by Philip Ryken, *The Messiah Comes to Middle Earth*. Ryken looks at the three-fold office of Christ through the lens of Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* Trilogy. (I taught a series of classes on these books 17 years ago. They are great books. And the movies were well done.)

A. Toward the end of the first of the three books Frodo, the hobbit who has the ring, decides he has to get away from the rest of the fellowship that was going with him to Mordor to destroy the ring. He slips on the ring and becomes invisible and sneaks away. When the fellowship realizes he is gone they take off looking for him. His friend, Sam, realizes that Frodo must have decided to go to Mordor on his own so he takes off to the river to find and join Frodo.

1. When he gets to the river he jumps in to catch onto the boat but misses it by a yard and begins to sink. He can't swim and calls for Frodo to save him. ^[4]

2. Frodo saves him, takes the boat back to the shore, removes his ring and tells Sam that he is a nuisance, and if Sam had not come he would already be safely on his way to Mordor.

3. To which Sam says, "Safely! All alone and without me to help you."

B. Ryken makes the point here that "hobbits were not meant to bear their burdens alone. They only fulfil their purpose when they journey together". ^[5]

C. And that is what our salvation is all about. We are not meant to journey through life bearing our sin and a guilty conscience - guilty before God and guilty before others. God means for us to go through life together with him and with each other – loving him and bearing each other's burdens.

1. And the way that begins is with a clean conscience before God and man. It begins with our guilt dealt with in such a just and complete way that we are left clean before God, and our brothers and sisters in Christ recognize us as cleansed and we recognize and treat them the same way.

^[1] Συνείδησις or transliterated syneidēsīn - syn means “together with” and eido means “to know”

^[2] The taking away of sin was foreshadowed (Heb 10:1) by the scapegoat in Lev 16. But the taking away is not actually accomplished until Jesus dies upon the cross.

^[3] And Can It Be

^[4] FR p. 422

^[5] Ryken p. 42