Serving God With A Pure Conscience
Acts 26:9-11

Introduction

- Why study?
  - “Conscience” appears 31 times in 29 verses.
  - Highest percentage in the life or writings of the Apostle Paul.
  - Many have an improper view of the role of the conscience.

- What is the conscience?
  - “an inner feeling or voice viewed as acting as a guide to the rightness or wrongness of one's behavior.”
  - Thayer: “… the soul, as distinguishing between what is morally good and bad, prompting to do the former and shun the latter, commending the one and condemning the other…
  - Sense of ought. (Acts 26:9; Rom. 2:15)

- God’s word instructs us to serve Him with a good conscience:
  - I Tim. 3:9 → Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.
  - II Tim. 1:3 → I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day;
  - Acts 24:16 → And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.

- God’s word instructs us to serve Him with a good conscience:
  - I Tim. 4:2 → Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;
  - Rom. 14:23 → And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

Discussion

- Should We “Let Our Conscience Be Our Guide”?
  - The religious philosophy of man.
  - Reflects a misunderstanding of the nature and role of the conscience.
    - The conscience acts, regulates according to the training, education that it has received.
    - It urges, prompts to do/refrain from doing what it understands to be right.
    - That training may be faulty, erroneous or incomplete.
  - The Bible is our guide. (Ps. 119:105; II Tim. 3:16-16; Jn. 8:31-32)
  - The Bible is our guide...
    - To function properly, the conscience must act in accord with God’s word.
    - The good conscience will do better when it learns what is right. (Acts 26:19)
    - The importance of the conscience being properly trained.
Parents to children. (Prov. 22:6; Eph. 6:4)
As we read and study God’s word. (II Tim. 2:15)
As we are taught when the church assembles. (Acts 20:29-30)

Those Who Had A Troubled Conscience...

- Peter.
  - Matt. 26:75 → And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.

- The Ephesians.
  - Acts 19:18-19 → Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver.

- The Jews on Pentecost.
  - Acts 2:37 → Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?

Those Who Had A Clear Conscience, But Should Not Have...

- Saul.
  - Acts 23:1 → And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.

- The Jews.
  - Rom. 10:2 → For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge,

- The Proud Pharisee
  - Lk. 18:11-12 → The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

To Serve God With A Pure Conscience

- We must be obedient, faithful, and forgiven.

- Obedience to the gospel:
  - Heb. 9:9 → Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience;

  - Heb. 9:9; 9:14 → How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

  - Heb. 10:22 → Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

  - I Pet. 3:21 → The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ: