

Solid Rock Christian Church Manassas, Virginia

Bible Study - September 16, 2021

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Title: "When You Can't Forgive Yourself"

Subtitle: "Canceling Guilt Trips"

Scripture Reference: Matthew 27:20-25

"But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus. The governor answered and said unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas. Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified. And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified. When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it. Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children."

I. Introduction

A. There is an old familiar hymn that seems appropriate, and I believe that it speaks so clearly to our lesson topic. The words are as follows: "There is a fountain filled with blood - Drawn from Emanuel's veins, and sinners plunged beneath that flood, lose all their guilty and stains."

B. When Pilate turned Jesus over to the multitudes to be crucified, he must have felt extremely guilty because he didn't want to do it. He couldn't find anything wrong with Jesus, but the pressure to please the crowd was too great.

C. As a result, he bowed to the pressure and released a criminal (Barabbas) and sentenced an innocent man (Jesus) to be crucified. Then Pilate went over to a bowl of water, washed his hands in front of the multitude, and told them, "I am innocent of the blood

of this just person: see ye to it."

D. Innocent? If he really thought that he was innocent, why did he wash his hands? People don't wash their hands unless they are dirty. Pilates problem was he tried to wash his hands rather than his heart. Hands can be the instruments of sin, but it is in the heart where sin resides.

Point: Washing your hands will never cleanse a guilty conscience.

E. After Pilate delivered up Jesus to be crucified, he tried and thought he had a method to remove his guilt (i.e., washing his hands).

Comment: Here's a thought for you to consider: When Pilate went to bed that night, do you suppose he had a clear conscience?

F. For many people, the guilt of sin is the refusal to accept what Jesus Christ has already accomplished by His death on the cross. He has paid our sin debt and all we need to do is ask the Lord for forgiveness, and then accept what He has done. Then you can come from under the burden of guilt.

G. When you fail to do that, guilt will be manifested by those continuous nagging thoughts that accuse you when you have done something wrong.

H. God has put a conscience within us that works sort of like an alarm clock. Whenever we sin against God, our conscience alerts us to the fact that we have done wrong, even if we say that we are innocent.

I. In a large city courtroom two men were on trial for robbery. A witness to the crime was asked, "Were you at the scene when the robbery took place?" The witness replied, "Yes." "And did you observe the two robbers?" Again, the witness said, "Yes." The prosecuting attorney turned up the intensity of his questioning and with a booming voice asked, "And are those two men in the courtroom today?"

J. Before the witness could answer, the two defendants raised their hands! Although they claimed to be innocent, their consciences gave them away.

K. Pilate claimed innocence but his conscience was eating away at him. He tried to excuse his guilt by washing his hands, and just like Pilate, we try to remove our guilt by using wrong methods. Here are some of those wrong methods.

II. Discussion - Method # 1 - Blame It On Someone Else

A. This is the method Pilate used. Pilate in essence said to the crowd, "This is not my fault. It's yours." The Blame-it On Someone Else Method shifts the blame off of yourself and onto someone else.

B. This method is not new and in fact, it goes all the way back to the Garden of Eden. After Adam had sinned against God, he felt guilty. When God asked Adam if he had eaten of the tree from which God commanded him not to eat, Adam used the Blame-It On Someone Else Method. He told God, "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." (Genesis 3:12)

C. Then the Lord asked Eve what she had done. She got in on the blame game too and she said, "The serpent beguiled (deceived) me, and I did eat." (Gen. 3:13) But consider this - God didn't ask the serpent because He knew that the serpent didn't have a leg to stand on! Neither do you and I when we try to shift the blame.

D. Here is how The Blame-It On Someone Else Method works: Blame it on God; blame it on your wife; blame it on your mother. But whatever you do, don't blame yourself.

III. Discussion - Method # 2 - Run and Hide

A. This is the method that Peter used. Jesus told Peter he would deny Him three times before the cock crowed twice (Mark 14:30). Peter responded that he would never do anything like that; but he did.

B. At the exact moment he denied Jesus the third time, the cock crowed and Matthew 26:75 says - "Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which he said unto him, **Before the cock crow, thou shall deny me thrice.** And he went out, and wept bitterly."

C. We will respond in one of two ways when we sin. We can either run from God and try to hide, or we can run to God and receive cleansing.

D. Maybe you have felt too ashamed, and you tried to run from God. Perhaps you believed that you couldn't face God because of what you have done. So, you run away from church. You run away from Christian fellowship and the support system that you need.

E. When you do this, you are doing exactly what Satan wants you to do. As long as you are on the run, Satan's work on you becomes easy.

F. If you are not a Christian, his job is to keep you from a relationship with God. If you are a Christian, his job is to keep you from having fellowship with God. The Run-and-Hide Method is the way Satan wants you to respond to your guilt.

IV. Discussion - Method # 3 - Cover It Up

A. This is the method Judas used. The person who uses this method pretends that nothing is wrong. He or she will cover up what they have done and push it down inside of themselves. Some call this "being in denial."

Comments:

- (1) Denial is refusing to admit that there is a problem.
- (2) If we don't own up to the things we do, we are forced to cover them up.

B. This is what Judas did. He betrayed the Son of God and then sat down and ate with Him, pretending like everything was just

fine. You remember the narrative, Judas betrayed Jesus for thirty pieces of silver and then went to the upper room for the Last Supper with Jesus and the other disciples.

C. As they were eating, Jesus said, "**Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.**" And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I?" (Matt. 26:21-22)

D. "And he answered and said, **He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me. The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born.**" (Matt. 26:23-24)

E. "Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? ..." (v 25) Judas thought that if he acted innocently, then his guilt would go away; it didn't. In fact, his guilt eventually drove him to commit suicide.

The Cover-It-Up Method doesn't work either!

V. Exposition [Part I] - The Only Cure for the Guilt Problem

A. The sad declaration by the Jewish crowd - "**His blood be on us, and on our children**" (Matt. 27:25b), testified to what John recorded in John 1:11 - "He came unto his own, and his own received him not."

B. That declaration by the Jewish crowd did not absolve Pilate nor them of collective guilt and although there was no verbal acknowledgment by the crowd of guilt, Pilate's actions of washing his hands spoke quite loudly.

C. Their collective guilt was actually sin and sin is a burden; and the burden of sin and guilt has only one cure, and it is the shed blood Jesus Christ.

D. Pilate's guilt was caused because he delivered Christ (an

innocent man) to be crucified. The blood shed by our Lord during His crucifixion was Pilate's and the crowd's remedy, and also ours. But the remedy **must** be received in faith, in order for the sin and guilt to be removed.

E. The Apostle Paul recorded the following concerning Christ in Ephesians 1:7 - "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."

Point: We don't need our guilt relieved; We must have it removed!

F. Guilt can only be removed when it encounters something more powerful than itself. The only thing more powerful than guilt is the blood of Jesus.

VI. Exposition [Part II] - First - Admit what you have done.

A. No more covering up. No more pretending. It's time to come clean and as the saying goes - "fess up." David said, "I acknowledge my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." (Psalm 32:5)

B. Listen to this short story.

A prince traveling through France visited the arsenal of Toulon, where prisoners were kept. Because of his nobility, he was given permission by the commandant to release one of the condemned men.

The prince went from cell to cell and inquired why the prisoners were there. Each prisoner declared his innocence, saying he was falsely accused and did not deserve to be there.

Finally, he came to one man who said, "My Lord, as much as I long to be free, I am guilty. I have committed many crimes and have nothing to say except that I deserve to be here.

The prince then yelled with a voice heard by all the prisoners as he said to the man - "You despicable wretch! What a pity you

should be among so many "honest" men. By your own confession you are bad enough to corrupt them all. You shall not stay with them another day!"

Turning to the commandant, the prince said, "This is the man; Release him at once!"

C. When we try to justify ourselves, our sin remains. But when we confess our sins, it puts us in position to receive forgiveness. True confession is good for the soul

VII. Exposition [Part III] - Second - Receive the cleansing.

A. The work has been done on the cross; the Lord Jesus Christ shed his blood; the price has been paid in full! The only thing left for you to do is to receive the Lord's forgiveness.

B. If someone offered you a hand full of money by holding it out in their hand, until you reached out to receive it from them, it would never be yours. The same is true with God's forgiveness. Until you receive it, it will never be yours.

C. When you reach out and receive God's forgiveness, the blood of Jesus cleanses you from all unrighteousness. Once the sin is removed, you don't need to feel guilty, because Jesus paid for your sins.

D. But what about the nagging thoughts of guilt that come after you have confessed your sins and received forgiveness? We must not forget that Satan is the accuser of the brethren and a liar.

E. The spirit of condemnation comes from the accuser to the child of God and whispers, "Remember what you did in the past?" This is when you need to remember the words of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ - "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."

F. If you have confessed your sins and received God's forgiveness, He has forgiven you. Now - forgive yourself!

It is once again interactive time. Please complete the Scripture passages that follow by filling in the blank spaces. As always, each passage has been taken from the King James Version (KJV) of the Holy Bible.

"There is therefore now no _____ to them which are in _____, who walk not after the _____, but after the _____."

[Romans 8:1]

"If we say that we have no _____, we _____ ourselves, and the _____ is not in us. If we _____ our _____, he is _____ and just to _____ us our sins, and to _____ us from all unrighteousness."

[1 John 1:8,9]

"But God be _____, that ye were the _____ of sin, but ye have _____ from the _____ that form of doctrine which was _____ you. Being then made _____ from _____, ye became the servants of _____."

[Romans 6:17,18]

"Stand _____ therefore in the _____ wherewith Christ hath made us _____, and be not _____ again with the yoke of _____."

[Galatians 5:1]

"The Lord _____ thee, and _____ thee: The Lord make his face _____ upon thee, and be _____ unto thee: The Lord lift up his _____ upon thee, and give thee _____."

[Numbers 6:24-26]

"_____ I leave with you, my _____ I give unto you: not as

the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your _____ be
_____, neither let it be _____."
[John 14:27]

Removing Your Guilt

- What wrong methods have you tried to use to remove your guilt?
- Have you been honest in confessing your sin(s) to God?
- Have you received the cleansing that only the blood of Jesus can provide?

I pray that this study has been a blessing to you and please feel free to share what you have gleaned with someone else.

Jude 3
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