

Critical Roles and Responsibilities

- Obey the gospel Mk. 16:15-16; Acts 2:38
- Hold Fast to the purity of the gospel Heb. 10:23
- Defend the gospel (Evangelism) Mt. 28:18
- Defend the gospel (False Teachers) Phil. 1:16
- Grow and change through the gospel. Mt. 7:24-27;
2Pet. 1:3-11;
- Jesus condemns those who don't defend. Rev. 2-3
- Jesus condemns those who don't grow. Rev. 2:1-6
- THE CHARGE: Teach no other doctrine. 1Tim. 1:3
- THE END (PURPOSE) OF THE CHARGE:
- **LOVE** out of a **PURE HEART**, a **GOOD CONSCIENCE**, and an **UNFEIGNED (AN-HUPOKRITOS) FAITH** 1Tim. 1:5

A Good Conscience

- *But the end of the charge is love out of a pure heart and a good conscience and faith unfeigned:*
- This command has always been difficult for me to understand. It follows the same route as purity.

If we say we have no sin...

- *If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. 8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. 1 John 1:6-10*

How Can We Have a Good Conscience?

- Every time we sin, our conscience begins to work
- We feel guilt, godly sorrow, remorse and disgust.
- How can we have a good conscience when we are feeling such emotions.
- When we consider all the things we should be doing (Jas. 4:17), we feel twinges of conscience.
- Could we have done that better?
- Did we make any errors or mistakes?
- Since our conscience is always working, every time we sin leading to repentance and we will never stop sinning, how can we have a good conscience?

Are we Missing Something?

- Do we have to be sinless and perfect to have a good conscience?
- Must our conscience never feel violated with guilt, disappointment and godly sorrow in order for it to be a “good conscience?”
- The only way we can assess this is to look at all the passages where this term is used.

A Good Conscience

- *Then Paul, looking earnestly at the council, said, "Men and brethren, I have lived **in all good conscience** before God until this day." Acts 23:1*
- After reading this verse, we generally go into an explanation of how Paul could have a good conscience while he was persecuting the church.
- Then never quite get back to the question:
- **What is a Good Conscience?**
- The real question is much simpler: How could Paul have a good conscience, after realizing the terrible things he had done?

How Could Paul Have a Good Conscience?

- To me, who **am less than the least of all the saints**, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, Eph 3:8
- **9 For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle**, because I persecuted the church of God. **10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.** 1Cor 15:9-11
- This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save **sinners, of whom I am chief.** 1 Tim 1:15-16
- With such feelings, how can Paul say I have lived before God with a good conscience?
- I think this is the key to our own good conscience.

What the Holy Spirit Revealed

- *But the end of the charge is love out of a pure heart and **a good conscience** and faith unfeigned: 1Tim 1:5*
- *This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, 19 **having faith and a good conscience**, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck, 1Tim 1:18-20*
- *Pray for us; for we are confident that **we have a good conscience**, in all things desiring to live honorably. 19 But I especially urge you to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner. Heb 13:18-19*

What is a Conscience?

- suneidesis lit., "a knowing with
- (sun- "with" oida, "to know"
- (con- "with" science "to know"
- "a co-knowledge (with oneself), the witness borne to one's conduct by the conscience"
- If this sounds complicated it's because it is.

- “*suneidesis*... [lit. ‘joint-knowledge’]... a. *the consciousness of anything*... b. *the soul as distinguishing between what is morally good and bad, prompting to do the former and shun the latter, commending the one, condemning the other; conscience*... “ (Thayer, p. 602-603; 4893)

The Conscience

- The inner workings and purpose:
- *in that they show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness therewith, and their thoughts one with another accusing or else excusing (them) Rom 2:15*
- The conscience bears witness and either accuses or excuses. Thus the conscience is a separate entity in the mind that watches over all our thoughts, words and deeds. It assesses motives, goals, and the true intent of each.
- It makes us feel good when we do what is right and terrible when we do what is wrong.

How the Conscience Functions

- *I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience bearing witness with me in the Holy Spirit, Rom 9:1*
- Paul says it with his mind,
- his conscience bears witness to its truth.
- Thus there are two voices
- Two to bear witness over our thoughts and deeds when faced with a moral dilemmas.
- Our mind might seek to justify, but underneath the mind is the conscience, forcing us to re-evaluate our conclusions and reassess it all.

How the Conscience Functions

- Facts in the mind: We take the Scriptures and lay them next to our thoughts and deeds.
- God has created us so our conscience oversees the process and makes it's own assessments.
- Our conscious mind plays no part here.
- When the conscience is functioning properly, it only oversees what is in the mind.
- Nothing in the mind can change its function to make us feel good when doing what we “know” is right / or bad / wrong

The Conscience

- It can only:
- accuse us if we are knowingly overlooking something that would change the outcome
- excuse us if we have taken all the facts into consideration and are doing the best we can to do what is right.

Paul's Conscience

- The facts in the mind may be right or wrong.
- But conscience can only work with what is in the mind.
- God did not design it to learn.
- Only to assess ... accuse ... excuse.
- If info is wrong conscience is not to blame.
- Paul's information was wrong so his conscience was still good.

Paul's Conscience

- *And Paul, looking stedfastly on the council, said, Brethren, I have lived before God in all good conscience until this day. Acts 23:1*
- *Herein I also exercise myself to have a conscience void of offence toward God and men always. Acts 24:16*
- *I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers in a pure conscience, how unceasing is my remembrance of thee in my supplications, night and day 2 Tim 1:3*
- We need to understand how Paul could have a good conscience through all these things so we can know that we too have a good conscience.