

“No More Consciousness of Sins” // Hebrews 9:1–14, 27–28

If you have a Bible, Hebrews 9: One of the central problems that Christianity claims to deal with is *guilt*. That’s pretty much what the whole premise of the gospel is built on: *we were guilty; Christ dealt with that*.

When people say “guilt,” they usually mean what you feel when you’ve done something wrong. Certain Christian counselors that I respect make the distinction between overt and covert guilt.

Overt guilt is when you *know* you’ve done something wrong and you feel guilty about it. I’m sure we have a number of people in here who struggle with that:

- A sexual sin you have committed.
- Or maybe that you’ve gotten ahead by cheating: At school. Or in business. Or the IRS.
- Maybe you know that you have been a bad parent, or a bad sibling, or a bad spouse, and you feel guilty about how you were to that person.
- Sometimes you can resolve the issue, and deal with it—repent, ask forgiveness, make restitution.
- But then sometimes you can’t. Sometimes the damage is **permanent and irreversible**.
 - The relationship is permanently destroyed.
 - Or the person is gone and you can’t say you’re sorry. Maybe you treated your parents badly before they died and you can never look at them and say you’re sorry.
- And then on top of that, even if you can deal with the guilt, sometimes you can’t shake the sense of shame that goes with it. Shame is not the same thing as guilt.

- Shame a lot of times grows out of guilt. It is the question of “*What kind of person am I who could do something like that?* Or, “*What if people found out...*”
- Say that you got caught embezzling from the IRS and had to pay a \$50K fine and spend 2 years in prison... If you paid your fine and served your sentence your legal guilt would be gone, but walking back into church here you’d still feel shame.
- Some of you have messed up in ways you’d never want anybody to find out about. Confessing some sins get you sympathy.
 - Group of guys you confess lust... everybody nods their head. Or if I stood up here and confessed pride.
 - Sometimes people are even proud of their faults. Do you ever notice that people who are type-A, or overwork, or OCD, like to confess that fault? “I just work too hard. I’m just care too much about my job. I’m just too responsible and neat and clean and PERFECT.” Sorry. Shut up.
- David Powlison says, “*Some sins, however, do not elicit sympathetic nods. If you were adulterous and your family found out, they would not be nodding. Shameful sins receive stares, not nods. Even when guilt is confessed, the shame remains.*”¹
 - There are certain sins that get confessed in small group that make you grow closer as a group; then there are sins that make it awkward.

All of that is what we call an “overt” sense of guilt. Pretty straightforward, but then there is “covert guilt,” which is this sense that we all have that something is wrong—a sense of shame.

- I’ve explained to you that you see it in the sense of nakedness that Adam and Eve felt in Genesis 2... The first effect of their sin was shame over their nakedness. Now

¹ David Powlison, <http://www.ccef.org/podcast/what-difference-between-guilt-and-shame>

they were naked before they sinned, but their nakedness didn't bother them... because they were clothed in the love and approval and acceptance of God. But now having been stripped of that, they felt naked.

- Even if you don't believe in God your soul has that sense. I used a couple of examples to illustrate this.
 - **Playwright Arthur Miller talked** about after he quit believing in God he still needed to be declared OK by somebody and he found that in the approval of audiences and critics. He confessed later that he realized all he had done was switched out God with other people.
 - **I found an interesting one this week in an article about Madonna** in *Vogue* Magazine. **She said, “My drive in life comes from a fear of being mediocre. That is always pushing me. I push past one spell of it and discover myself as a special human being but then I feel I am still mediocre and uninteresting unless I do something else. Because even though I have become somebody, I still have to prove that I am somebody. My struggle has never ended and I guess it never will.”**²
- Regardless of what you think about Madonna, that is a very insightful statement. She might know herself better than you know yourself. She recognizes that court for her is still in session! She's still looking for the “You're OK!” verdict.” *That's because she has an internal sense that something is wrong. The jury may be different but the case is the same.*
- All of this goes back to soul nakedness; a sense of guilt, a sense of guilt before God that you carry around. (You see, while your mind might not admit there's a God, your heart knows without a doubt!)

And what happens is that sense of guilt drives us, sometimes more than we know: ruining our relationships and destroying our lives.

² Tim Keller, *The Freedom of Self-Forgetfulness*, 22.

Forbes magazine article (don't mean to give too much introduction... but this is really good and I spent all this time putting this stuff together so I don't want to let any of it go to waste): *6 Signs you are suffering from guilt and probably don't know it:*³

- *Close relationships don't last* (there's such a deep wound, a deep dissatisfaction that people can't get close to you because they might touch that wound)
- *You are chronically tired and distracted.* Because you carry around this burden.
- *You joke harshly at others' expense, thinking that in tearing them down you will feel better.*
- *You respond dramatically to other people's criticism of you.* That describe anyone?
- *You are paranoid about what everyone's thinking about you, because you project the bad things you think about yourself onto them.*
- *You sabotage you own efforts* (at work, in relationships, etc.—because you feel like you don't deserve to succeed; you don't deserve to be in a good marriage.

(Have I made you feel guilty for feeling guilty yet?)

How the Bible deals with guilt (that's the subject of Hebrews 9)

In vv 1–12 of chapter 9 the author of Hebrews goes through a description of the Old Testament sacrificial system and he explains that the whole temple was set up to deal with our guilt, our sense of separation from God.

³ <http://www.forbes.com/sites/stevenberglas/2012/06/07/6-signs-you-are-suffering-from-guilt-and-probably-dont-know-it/>

In Vs. 2, he describes 2 inner sections of the Temple. The first was called the Holy Place. (Would have looked like this: **Tab pic 3**)

There were three, basic pieces of furniture in there:

- **First there was the lamp stand**, which was lit day and night as a reminder of God's continual presence with them.⁴ Kind of a weird design, but the Mishnah says it was supposed to look like the tree of life.⁵
- **Then there was the table of showbread**: Had these 12 loaves of bread on it, called "the bread of the presence." Interesting that in most religions the people leave bread for the deity. This was supposed to symbolize bread God was giving to them. It was called "the bread of the presence," the promise that God would always provide for them.⁶
- **Finally there was the altar of incense**. It stood right in front of the Holy of Holies. Represented two things: another barrier between them and God, but also that their prayers like that incense were always going up before Him.⁷

Separating this section from the innermost section, called the Holy of Holies (**Tab pic 3**), was a **curtain**.

- It was called the *paroket*, which means literally "shut off," which was exactly the veil's purpose.⁸
- It was really thick, about 4 inches. It was woven of 72 cords (each with 24 strands).
- Blue and red and purple.

⁴ Ex. 25:31-39, 27:20-21

⁵ Carol Meyers, "Lampstand," *The Anchor Bible Dictionary IV: K-N*, 142.

⁶ Ex. 25:23-30, 26:35, Lev. 24:6

⁷ The most common biblical picture used in connection with the altar of incense is prayer (Psalm 141:2, Revelation 5:8, 8:3-4). The idea would be that Jesus now continually intercedes for us (Hebrews 7:25).

⁸ Menahem Haran, *Temples and Temple-Service in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 152-153. Maurice Henry Harris, *Hebraic Literature: Translations from the Talmud, Midrashim and Kabbala* (M. Walter Dunne, 1901), 195-196

- Layers of **overlapping material** so that the place where the presence of God, the Holy of Holies, was in absolute, unapproachable darkness.⁹

In the Holy of Holies was one piece of furniture, *the Ark of the Covenant*. (You know what that looked like... **Pic from Raiders of Lost Ark**)

- There were a few things inside the Ark,¹⁰ but on the top of it was the **mercy seat** where the blood of sacrifice was sprinkled;
- And on top of that stood **two cherubim**, which stood like guards guarding entry to the presence of God.

Into that Holy of Holies only one priest, the high priest, would enter, and only 1x a year, on a day called "*Yom Kippur*," the Day of Atonement. On that day the High Priest would go in and sprinkle the blood of a clean animal sacrifice upon the top of the Ark.

As the writer of **Hebrews notes in verse 1 of chapter 9**, the High Priest was to make meticulous preparation before entering the Holy of Holies. No defilement was allowed upon him.

- Leviticus warns that if **any defilement** were found upon a person touching the Ark, he would be struck down in God's presence. That wasn't an idle threat, either—there are several stories in the Bible of that happening to people: *Nadab, Abihu, Uzziah, Uzzah*—all touched the ark with defilement and died.
- In fact, some traditions say that **small bells** were placed on the edge of his robe and a rope tied around his ankle so that if he were struck down they could hear it and drag his

⁹ Psalm 97:2; Hebrews 10:20

¹⁰ In that was a copy of the **10 commandments; Aaron's staff** that budded (That had been the proof that God had called him to priesthood). And a **pot of manna**. Craig R. Koester, *Hebrews*, The Anchor Bible, 402.

corpse out safely.¹¹ That's probably a legend, but it shows you the seriousness they took all of this with.

The week leading up to the Day of Atonement was an intense process. **Old Testament scholar Ray Dillard describes it:**

“A week beforehand, the high priest was put into seclusion—taken away from his home and into a place where he was completely alone. Why? So he wouldn't accidentally touch or eat anything unclean. Clean food was brought to him, and throughout the week he'd wash his body and prepare his heart.

The night before the Day of Atonement he didn't go to bed; he stayed up all night praying and reading God's Word to purify his soul.

Then on Yom Kippur he bathed head to toe and dressed in pure, unstained white linen. Then he went into the Holy of Holies and offered an animal sacrifice to God to atone, or pay the penalty for, his own sins.

- (he offered three bulls. The first he paid for, and it was an offering for his own sin—you see this referred to in **verse 7**)

After that he came out and bathed completely again, and new white linen was put on him, and he went in again, this time sacrificing for the sins of the priests.

¹¹ There is some question as to whether this detail was actual or legend. The first mention comes in a 13th century Rabbinic commentary called *Zohar*, Volume 16, “Emor;” Section 34, “Yom Kippur;” Paragraph 251 (p. 255), though it seems to be loosely based on Exodus 28:33–35. Jewish leaders had been known to add provisions to the Mosaic laws to make sure that they kept them. Whether or not this was one of them at the time of Zechariah cannot be known for sure. What is certain is that entering the Holy of Holies was a serious, life-threatening endeavor.

But that's not all. He would come out a third time, and he bathed again from head to toe and they dressed him in brand new pure linen

- **(HE put on AN EPHOD with stones representing the 12 tribes of Israel showing that they were on his heart and he was representing them),**

and he went into the holy of holies and atoned for the sins of all the people....

Dillard continues... *“this was all done in public. The temple was crowded, and those in attendance watched closely. There was a thin screen, and he bathed behind it. But the people were present: They saw him bathe, dress, go in, come back out. He was their representative before God, and they were there cheering him on. They were very concerned to make sure that everything was done properly and with purity, because he represented them before God.”¹²*

- After this the High Priest would come out and they would go through the ceremony of the scapegoat.¹³ **You see it**

¹² Tim Keller, quoting Ray Dillard from a sermon he heard Dillard preach. In *King's Cross: The Story of the World in the Life of Jesus* (New York: Penguin Group, 2011), 79–80. For more on this, see Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, The Anchor Bible, 1015–16. Milgrom draws his conclusions from the Mishnah that expands on Yom Kippur with most detail, the *Yoma*. The *Yoma* includes details such as appointing a back-up priest in case the first is unfit, “dry runs” in which the priest practices the motions of pouring the blood, and the specific order of body parts to bathe.

¹³ Lev 16:9–10, 20–22 *“In the early period the goat wandered around in the wilderness until it expired. Later the priests made sure that the goat did not wander back into civilization, for they had it led to a cliff and pushed over, plunging it to its death... The initial meaning of this ritual was to provide a visual representation to the assembly of the reality that on this day their sins had been*

referred to in vv. 19–20. Two goats were brought: one was sacrificed for sin, the priest would take his blood and sprinkle it toward the people (you'll see that referred to); and then they would take a piece of wool and dip it into the blood and tie it around the neck of the other goat (**that's what the 'scarlet wool' in verse 19 refers to**) and then set that goat free in the wilderness, representing the fact that the goat was carrying away the sin of the people. (That's where we get the phrase "scapegoat".)

- It was supposed to be a really bad omen if the goat wandered back into the camp, so they would station a few guys outside to make sure the goat fell off a cliff or something.¹⁴

So, all these ceremonies and regulations and arrangements for entering the presence of God... but here is what the author concludes about it all: [9] According to this arrangement, gifts and sacrifices are offered that **cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper**, [10] but deal only with food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until the time of reformation.

- All that pomp and circumstance, and it couldn't do the one thing we needed: **perfect the conscience, remove the guilt or change the heart.**

[11] But when **Christ** appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) [12] he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats

completely wiped out and the power of these sins was terminated forever." Hartley, *Leviticus*, 238.

¹⁴ Jesus himself took our sin upon himself, and was led "outside the camp" to carry our sins away. While the author of Hebrews does not address the scapegoat explicitly, he *does* mention offerings outside the camp (Heb 13:11–12), which is a similar typological connection. *Ibid.*, 241.

and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.

[13] For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, [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.

Don't these symbols, the author says, have to point to something? They point to Christ. All of the Old Testament, the writer of Hebrews is explaining to you, all of it—the stories of the Prophets and the miracles and the kings and the miraculous births and the miracles and the killing of giants and surviving of the fiery furnaces—all of these things were shadows; Christ was the substance.

- **The cleanliness required in the temple was a picture of the holiness required by God to be in His presence.**
 - Surely God's concern was not dirt. He created dirt. Physical uncleanness represents something.
 - The effect that uncleanness has on you gives you a picture of how moral uncleanness affects God.
 - If someone reaches out their hand to shake yours, and you notice they have fecal matter on their hand, you recoil.
 - Or the reaction you have when someone has foul breath.
 - If you are about to meet someone important, you want to make sure that you are clean. **Check the mirror; sniff your armpits.** If you are going to talk to someone important, you take a **breath mint**, or do the weirdest thing—blow in a friend's face.
 - That's all symbolic of the reaction God has to moral uncleanness. It is repulsive to Him.

- **The work of the high priest** pointed to the work of Christ.¹⁵
 - All that preparation to take away guilt. That pointed to Christ, who would do all that for us, but in the strangest way.
 - *If you study the last week of Jesus' life, you'll notice that Jesus seems to be staging His own Day of Atonement. Just like the High Priest...*
 - *He began to prepare for a week beforehand: it's called 'the Passion week.'*
 - *The night before His sacrifice, He **stayed up all night**.*
 - He wasn't **clothed in rich garments** like the Jewish High Priest, he was stripped of the only garment he had.
 - Instead of being **cheered on** by the people, however, he was jeered by them, and He was abandoned by nearly everyone he loved.
 - He wasn't **bathed** in a purifying pool; He was bathed in human spit.
 - And when he came before God, He didn't receive **words of encouragement**; the Father turned His face away.
 - But He effectively put away our sin forever, because He wasn't a sinful high priest making a sacrifice for our sin, He was a perfect Savior who *became* the sacrifice for our sin.¹⁶
 - Just like the high priest wore the 12 tribes of Israel on his heart, Jesus had us on his heart when "for the joy that was set before Him, He endured the cross and despised its shame."
- **Each piece of the tabernacle was a shadow of Christ:**
 - He was Lampstand that brought the light of God to us. ***Jesus said (John 8:12), "I am the light of the world."***

¹⁵ Hebrews 5:4, Christ was a priest approved as Aaron was (the budding staff).

¹⁶ Deut 21:23. Keller, *King's Cross*, 81.

John 8:12. Those who know Him walk in the light of life.

- He was the table of showbread. ***He said, John 6:35, "I am the bread of life."*** Those who feast on Him are **never hungry**.
 - The curtain was a symbol of His flesh, torn so we could enter the presence of God. At the crucifixion a Roman soldier saw the curtain torn in two, symbolizing that the way unto God had been opened...
 - He was the mercy seat where His blood was sprinkled so that we could find forgiveness of sins.
 - One of my favorite details in the Gospel of John (20:12) John mentions two *angels* in the tomb, at the head and foot of where Jesus was laid... like the cherubim on the sides of the mercy seat on the Holy of Holies. Jesus' slain body was now our mercy seat where we find forgiveness of sins.
- **Finally, He was the scapegoat:**
 - Jesus carried away our sins forever.
 - As far away as the East is the West, hidden in the depths of the sea. They are not merely covered over; they are gone forever.¹⁷

What the old temple gave you as a shadow, Christ fulfilled in reality. He made an end to sin and sat down forever.

What is most intriguing to me in this passage, however, is how the writer says that the blood of Jesus does something with our guilt that the Old Covenant never could.

I find 3 in this chapter; the first two are in vs. 14:

"how much more will the blood of Christ... purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God." (9:14)

3 things the blood of Jesus does with our guilt:

¹⁷ Heb 13:11-12

1. From guilt to purity

- Jesus did not simply cover our guilt, or waive the penalty, He did away with it forever. **Charles Spurgeon** used to say that it would now be unjust for God to punish us for our sin, because God would be requiring two payments for the same sin.
- People sometimes ask me to explain how this whole thing works... How does Jesus dying for sin remove my guilt before God?
- Honestly, I don't know exactly. It's easy to see that a lot of injustices require **restitution**.
 - E.g. wrecking my car... if I forgive you, then I am agreeing to pay the penalty. At the cross, *that's what God did. He agreed to pay our penalty for us.*
 - When someone commits an injustice against you it makes you suffer, and the way you alleviate your suffering is to make them suffer. If a friend is **rude and thoughtless** toward me, then my reaction is to be rude to them and make them suffer for what they have done to me. If I forgive them, however, that means that I will not pay them back for their injustice, but will absorb the sting of it into myself and give them a mercy and a respect that they doesn't deserve. **At the cross, that's what God did. He absorbed the sting of our insult into Himself.**
- So, I can use those examples as analogies, but at the end of the day, we know it works because God says it does.
 - J.I. Packer, in *In My Place Condemned He Stood*, "How it is possible for [Jesus] to bear our penalty we do not claim to know, any more than we know how it was possible for him to be made man; but that he bore it is the certainty on which all our hopes rest" (84).
 - C.S. Lewis called it the "**Deeper magic**" of the universe, that when an innocent willfully suffers for the guilty, then the curse upon the guilty is reversed.
- So I can't tell you exactly how it all works, but what I can tell you that the Bible is clear that apart from the blood of Christ there is no forgiveness of sins. **Vs. 22** says, "Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins." (9:22).
 - Those religions that try to teach that God can forgive sin apart from the shed blood of Jesus are (simply put), WRONG... for example, saying there are multiple ways to God; as if Christ's death is 1 way and Buddha's 8-fold path or Mohammad's 5 pillars are another...
- Blood is required because it's the only way to remove guilt. But notice that the verse doesn't simply say that guilt is removed; it says that God makes us pure. Forgiveness means you are released from the negative consequences of guilt. Purity means that you are given an exalted position of righteousness.¹⁸
- We've been bathed, cleansed, dressed in white, made pure.
- The girl who committed sexual sin is pure and spotless again in God's eyes—cherished!
 - Best illustrations of this I've heard comes from a book by Mark Driscoll called *Death by Love*: "A friend of mine had been married to a woman he dearly loved for many years. Yet they were never as close and intimate as he desired, and he could not figure out why. It was because his wife was . . . filled with shame. She had been molested as a girl, raped as a young woman, and promiscuous throughout much of her teen years. She even cheated on her husband during their

¹⁸ "The gospel doesn't just have a negative side: the release guilt, condemnation, and wrath—it has a positive side: In Christ you are loved, accepted, innocent." Justin and Lindsey Holcomb. *Rid of My Disgrace: Hope and Healing for Victims of Sexual Assault*. Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2011, 117.

engagement and did not share these shameful, dark secrets with him. After many years, she finally told her husband who she truly was, what she had truly done, and what had been truly done to her.

The truth devastated her husband, who would have never married her had he known of her infidelity during their engagement... *(plus, she knew that some guys wouldn't want to be with a girl that had been abused so much because they'd look at her like damaged goods or something...)* At this point she feared that her husband would leave her and want nothing to do with her. *And to her horror, he just walked out:* he left their home, and she did not know where he was going or if he would ever return.

But he did something unexpected. He went to the store and purchased for her a new, clean white nightgown. He returned home and asked her to undress in front of him and clothe herself in white, which she did. He then said that he had chosen to see her not by what she had done or by what had been done to her, but instead solely by what Jesus had done for her to forgive her and cleanse her defilement. He embraced her and prayed for her, and she wept tears that purified her soul as her sin was put away from her by the love of Jesus and her husband, who was filled with the Spirit of God.”¹⁹

- Forgiveness tells us “you may go.” The gospel tells you “we are cherished, so please come.”

From guilt to purity. Second thing in that verse: ***“how much more will the blood of Christ... purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.” (9:14)***

2. **From dead works to loving service**

- Religion is filled with all kinds of works, but they are dead, because, before the gospel, the reason we were doing good works was to try and get God to approve of us.
- If you are doing something good so that God will reward you for it, that's not loving God; it's loving yourself.
- Let's say that you owned some really nice beach house and I find out that sometimes you let friends use your beach house for free and I say, “*Hmm... If I take out so and so for dinner, maybe they'll let me use the beach house.*” ***That's not love for you, that's an investment.*** I think, “For a \$60 dinner I can score a week at a beach house!” You should let me use it simply because you love me as your pastor.
- Religion leads you to dead works, because you are doing good works to be accepted by God. The gospel gives you God's acceptance as a gift, and the result is that you begin to serve God because you love God; because you are grateful to Him.
- **That's the difference in religion and the gospel.**
 - In religion you do good works in order to be accepted by God; with the gospel you do good works *because you have been accepted by God.*
 - I think it was John Newton, former slave owner, who told the story about a converted slave owner, maybe himself, who would save his money and go to the slave auctions to purchase slaves and then promptly set them free... In one of these occasions he told the girl she was free and she said... “I choose to go with you.”
 - **John Newton** (writer of *Amazing Grace*) “Our pleasure and our duty, though opposite before,

¹⁹ Mark Driscoll & Gerry Breshears, *Death by Love: Letters from the Cross* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 2008), 157–158.

Since we have seen His beauty, are joined apart no more. To see the Law by Christ fulfilled, to hear His pardoning voice, Transforms a *Slave* into a Child, and *Duty* into Choice.

- **Religious ritual cannot take away sin.** The Jewish people made a mistake. They took the symbol and started to treat it like it was the real thing. They started to think that the blood of bulls and goats actually could take away sin.
 - **People do that today...** when they think that saying Hail Mary's can take away their sin. Why would repeating a bunch of words take away our sin? Annoying to me. At its best, that just covers sin. Like spraying yourself with cologne instead of taking a bath. That may work for a few time but you're not actually cleansing the stench.
 - **Or thinking that if you take communion it will take away your sin.**
 - Those are **dead works** with no power to actually remove sin.
 - **Only the blood of Jesus takes away sin.** It doesn't just cover sin; or spray cologne on it; it removes the guilt and transforms you.

3. **From dread to longing**

[27] And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, (reincarnation: another chance to be saved) [28] so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

- The biggest change of the gospel. We used to have a sense of dread about God, but the gospel gives us a love for God, and a longing for Him. When you fear judgment, you don't really want to be around God; when you are

assured of His love and acceptance for you, you start to crave being around Him.

- I see this with my kids... when I come home from a trip, I'm always so glad to see them and so they come running out to me... they know I've got gifts. They just can't wait to talk to me... I've heard that changes... but don't ruin it for now. Ryah will start jabbering and telling me about her day and she's only 4 so it won't make much sense.
- When my kids think I'm mad...
- ***The gospel gives us that sense before God. Rather than fear judgment, we begin to long for God.***

3 changes: It is because of this heart transformation that we can escape the shame of our sin. People say, "I know that I'm forgiven (the guilt is gone) but I still feel such shame over what I did."

- **The gospel transforms you to the point that you are a new person!** According to **2 Cor 5:17**, you are a new creation. The part that did that has been crucified with Christ (**Gal 2:20**) and has been put away!
 - *Illustration:* Guy who was saved to woman he used to carouse with... came up to him and started to flirt. He pulled away... "It's me!" "But it's not me!"
- Now, you say, "A-ha! A lot of the mistakes I made happened **after** I was saved." The Bible says we are new creations still trapped in a body of sin. Our spirit is a new creation, but our sinful flesh is still corrupt. The part that made the mistakes is the part that Jesus died to put away. So right now, Romans 6 says, we have to reckon ourselves dead to sin and alive unto God.
- When we feel shame about we've done, we say, "Yes, that guy who did that is shameful. That's why Christ died for him. That guy is worthy of death and He is not going on into the future."
- ...And in your daily life you put to death that old sinful person that made those shameful mistakes and live unto the new person Christ has made you, who is pure and sinless!

People say, "Well, I know that God has forgiven me but I can't forgive myself." You ever heard someone say that? When you make that statement what you are saying is that your opinion of yourself matters more to you than God's does. What it means is that you have a standard you have to reach to have any worth or value. It might be one that your parents set for you; or one you've created that sets yourself above others and that's how you get your worth. You have to base your worth on what GOD thinks about you. You don't have worth because you are better than others, or because you've reached some standard, but because God has set His affection on you, and you have to find your identity in that!

- ***The point is that God has forgiven you, cherished you, so all the accusing voices, whether from the devil, or from others, or from yourself, can be silenced!***
- ***Remember the Duck:*** "Do you remember the story about the little boy who killed his grandmother's pet duck? He accidentally hit the duck with a rock from his slingshot. The boy didn't think anybody saw the foul deed, so he buried the duck in the backyard and didn't tell a soul.

Later, the boy found out that his sister had seen it all. Not only that, she now had the leverage of his secret and used it. Whenever it was the sister's turn to wash the dishes, take out the garbage or wash the car, she would whisper in his ear, "Remember the duck." And then the little boy would do what his sister should have done.

There is always a limit to that sort of thing. Finally, he couldn't take it anymore—he'd had it! The boy went to his grandmother and, with great fear, confessed what he had done. To his surprise, she hugged him and thanked him. She said, "I was standing at the kitchen sink and saw the whole thing. I forgave you then. I was just wondering when you were going to get tired of your sister's blackmail and come to me."

If he already saw and forgave you, don't let anybody say to you, 'Remember the duck.'"²⁰

God took care of the duck. So walk in freedom and newness of life.

Many of you have done something wrong against someone and you need to go to them and ask forgiveness and make restitution where you can... but the real guilt, the unsettledness, that soul disquiet, that can only be found by finding peace with God through the blood of Jesus' cross and the power of new life in His resurrection.