

## "THE CONDITIONING OF A CONSCIENCE"

BY DR. PAUL L. WALKER

Acts 24:16

92124

Well, let's just praise the Lord and thank the Lord for that excellent job this evening. Well done.

Will you just find your Bibles please and turn with me to Acts chapter 24? What a refreshing experience it is to see young people make that kind of commitment tonight, isn't it? They just blessed my heart and brought me into a place of worship to God. Hallelujah.

You know, David Cooper leaned over to me and said, "You know, it just seems like yesterday I was singing in the youth choir." I reminded him that it was a few yesterdays that he sang in the youth choir. You never know who, what or how will come out of a youth choir. Paul Dana and David went to college together and were roommates together. They were very close friends for many years. They got acquainted here in the church and grew up together in our youth choirs and moved forward. I used to go visit them at Lee College. They made them move off the campus. They made too much racket with their guitars and their singing. I went into their apartment one day and I took one look at it. Then I made a great big sign that said, "Quarantined" and put it on the door. I think they went through

college with one pair of blue jeans apiece. They just stood them in a corner and jumped in them every day and went on to class. Well, something good comes out of it anyhow, David.

Will you stand with me for the reading of the Word this evening? I'm going to read a whole chapter. Can you all survive a whole chapter? Acts chapter 24, to get us into the ballpark this evening, because I want to talk about something very important. It might be the most important thing we talk about. I want to take my time and I want you to try to think in terms of where you are in regard to a conditioned conscience. We're going to talk about the conditioning of a conscience.

I looked at these young people as they were singing this evening and they just gave me the privilege this past week of going on their senior trip from Mt. Paran Christian School and spending a little time with the seniors there. This is a tough world that these young people are going into. It's a tough world that you're living in and we're all in. As you know, I grew up in a minister's home and I have been pastoring here for thirty-two years and I've watched the changes in human beings and watched the changes in social trends. It's not an easy time for people to find their way in a world that doesn't know where it's going, who it is or what it's answers are. We who feel like we have the answers to it, we have this great challenge to help the world to see that Jesus Christ is coming soon. **Be ye ready for**

such an hour as you think not, the Son of Man cometh. I don't know what key we're in. Let's get in F, please.

(Singing)

Beginning in Acts 24, you know that Paul was just taken down to Caesarea-by-the-Sea after there was a plot on his life in the Jerusalem jail.

Five days later the high priest Ananias went down to Caesarea with some of the elders and a lawyer named Tertullus, and they brought their charges against Paul before the governor. When Paul was called in, Tertullus presented his case before Felix: "We have enjoyed a long period of peace under you and your foresight has brought about reforms in this nation. Everywhere and in every way, most excellent Felix, we acknowledge this with profound gratitude. But in order not to weary you further, I would request that you be kind enough to hear us briefly."

"We have found this man to be a troublemaker, stirring up riots among the Jews all over the world. He is a ringleader of the Nazarene sect and even tried to desecrate the temple; so we seized him. By examining him yourself you will be able to learn the truth about all these charges we are bringing against him."

The Jews joined in the accusation, asserting that these things were true.

When the governor motioned for him to speak, Paul replied: "I know that for a number of years you have been a judge over

this nation; so I gladly make my defense. You can easily verify that no more than twelve days ago I went up to Jerusalem to worship. My accusers did not find me arguing with anyone at the temple, or stirring up a crowd in the synagogues or anywhere else in the city. And they cannot prove to you the charges they are now making against me. However, I admit that I worship the God of our fathers as a follower of the Way, which they call a sect. I believe everything that agrees with the Law and that is written in the Prophets, and I have the same hope in God as these men, that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked. [Note this verse- verse 16.] So I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man."

"After an absence of several years, I came to Jerusalem to bring my people gifts for the poor and to present offerings. I was ceremonially clean when they found me in the temple courts doing this. There was no crowd with me, nor was I involved in any disturbance. But there are some Jews from the province of Asia, who ought to be here before you and bring charges if they have anything against me. Or these who are here should state what crime they found in me when I stood before the Sanhedrin- unless it was this one thing I shouted as I stood in their presence: 'It is concerning the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial before you today.'"

Then Felix, who was well acquainted with the Way, adjourned the proceedings. "When Lysias the commander comes," he said, "I

will decide your case." He order the centurion to keep Paul under guard but to give him some freedom and permit his friends to take care of his needs.

Several days later Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was a Jewess. He sent for Paul and listened to him as he spoke about faith in Christ Jesus. As Paul discoursed on righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and said, "That's enough for now! You may leave. When I find it convenient, I will send for you." At the same time he was hoping Paul would offer him a bribe, so he sent for him frequently and talked with him.

When two years had passed, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus, but because Felix wanted to grant a favor to the Jews, he left Paul in prison.

Now go back to verse 16. In the midst of the trial of his life, Paul makes a very important affirmation. **So I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man.** Shall we pray?

Father God, we thank you now for your presence in this place and for your power. We pray that you would touch us now with your Spirit that we might be anointed with your goodness and your grace, to see your Word and to receive it gladly, in Jesus' name. Amen and amen.

You may quietly be seated.

You know, it is difficult to realize that in eight years we will be celebrating the 2000th anniversary of the history of Christianity. That means that over 2000 years ago, Jesus Christ said to his disciples, in Matthew chapter 16, verse 18, **"Upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."**

Just a few short months after that, he said to his disciples in Acts 1:8, **"But ye shall receive power after the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you will be witnesses to me in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the uttermost parts of the earth."**

Then just ten days later, in Acts chapter 2, the Holy Spirit came into the world and the church was born under the lordship of Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit and we find ourselves a part of that church coming into the end of this decade, which will be 2000 years.

The question is, when we come to the 2000th year celebration, will we have anything to celebrate or are we succumbing to the secular gods of materialism, hedonism, narcissism, relativism, and New Age-ism? Do we find ourselves really being caught up and drawn into the groups and the ideologies that glorify the self rather than glorifying God? Do we find ourselves caught up in the worst of the American Dream, whereby we are more concerned about the actualization of our own lives and our own feelings than we are about our concerns in the world? Do we find ourselves, in this very point in time,

wondering about how we are going to handle all of the problems that are social problems that have spiritual bases? What are we going to do about the fact that we live in an addictive society? Addicted to chemicals, addicted to possessions, addicted to a self-indulgent lifestyle. How are we going to manage our lives in the face of the high crime and lawlessness in which we find ourselves? What are we going to do about the pandemic of AIDS and drug addiction? What are we going to do about political apathy and religious hypocrisy? What are we going to do about the fact that there is a lack of ethics and a low morality in high places? What are our answers going to be?

Sometimes we look at our society and we look at our world and we ask the question, Oh God, where are you? Have you read the New York Times lately? Do you know what is going on in the world?

We look over our society and it looks like it is all mentally ill and that everybody is ready for the funny farm. We wonder how can people act so bizarre and how can people do so many strange things. It is interesting, but in the diagnostic, statistical manual that is put out on mental disorders by the American Psychiatric Association, that in 1917 when the first one came out, there were only 59 categories of mental illness. In 1952 it had grown to 109. In the last issue that came out, there were 292 different categories of mental illness. In the next one that is to be published, it is suggested that they add 94 more,

which would make close to 400 different ideas about what is mentally ill.

We've had to learn a whole new vocabulary. I heard the other day that a psychotic is a person who really believes that  $2 + 2 = 5$ . A neurotic is a person who believes that  $2 + 2 = 4$ , but he is very angry about the whole thing. And we've heard the story that the neurotic builds the air castles, the psychotic moves in them and the psychiatrist collects the rent off of them.

It is in the midst of this kind of world that these young people that sang so beautifully are going to have to make their way. It is in the midst of this kind of world that each one of us, who calls himself or herself a disciple of Jesus Christ, is trying to do the thing that God would have us to do. Suddenly in the midst of that kind of world, the Bible comes breaking through and gives to us a new kind of standard of living and gives to us a new position by which we can judge our lives.

The Bible talks about a life that can come from the inside out, rather than the outside in. The greatest decision that you will ever make in your life is whether I am going to live from the inside out or the outside in.

The Bible talks about a life that does the will of the Father. In Matthew chapter 12, verse 50, it says, **Anyone who does the will of my Father which is in Heaven, the same is my brother and my sister and my mother.**

The Bible talks about a life that can be led of the Spirit. In Romans 8:14, **As many as are led by the Spirit, they are the sons of God, for God has not given us the spirit of bondage again unto fear, but the spirit of adoption whereby we cry, "Abba, Father!" and his Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. And if children, then heirs of God and joint-heirs of God with Jesus Christ.**

The Bible talks about the fact that we can have a new sense of identity. We don't have to measure ourselves by our old past life. Those things that have passed away don't have to trouble us anymore, for we can be a part of a new citizenship. In Ephesians chapter 2, verses 19-21, it tells us that we are no more foreigners nor aliens, but we have been made members of the household of God and we are fellow-citizens with God's people and we're founded upon the foundation of the prophets and the apostles. Jesus Christ himself is the chief cornerstone and we are being brought together as the temple that rises up by the very presence of the living God in us and it is built up into a dwelling in which the spirit of God himself dwells.

The Bible tells us in no uncertain terms that we can live a life of integrity, that it doesn't matter what is going on in the world, or the values that the world lives by. In Romans chapter 12, verse 9, it says, Your love must be sincere. You've got to hate what is evil and cleave to what is good. Be devoted to one another in honor, preferring one another. Never be lacking in

zeal. Maintain your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, and faithful in prayer. Give generously to those who are in need and practice hospitality. Bless those who curse you and do not curse. Weep with those who weep and rejoice with those who rejoice. Do not be proud. Be willing to condescend to those people of low estate and do not be conceited. Do not return evil for those people who would be evil against you, but as much as possible within you, live a life that is holy before everyone, that people are going to see your good works and they are going to glorify your Father in heaven, because I have given you one commission and that one commission is to let the world know that righteousness still prevails and God is still on the throne. Amen, amen, and amen. Hallelujah be to God. Well, praise the Lord in this place. Amen, amen, and amen.

We know about the lifestyle and we understand what God is saying to us. But the question becomes, how does that become a living reality? The answer to that question is that we have to learn what it means to have a good conscience before God. When we come to this point in time, so many people believe that, my life is just lived by faith. If it happens, that's wonderful. If it doesn't happen, that's wonderful. So many people today are just caught up in the tide, like I can't do anything about my situation. There is nothing I can do about the situation that is concerning me and I find myself in this kind of lifestyle.

My father used to tell the story about a man who was an antique dealer. One day he went into an antique shop and he saw a very beautiful clock that was ten thousand dollars. So he bought that clock. It was such an important clock. He had a buyer for it in his own business, so he knew he could make about \$5,000 on it. He was so careful about that clock. He said, "I don't want anybody to take it to the truck. I've got to take it myself. I tell you what to do. I'm going to bend over and you strap it on my back. I'm just going to carry it to the truck." He went out the back door to go across the alley to put it on the truck and an old drunk came weaving down the alley. He ran smack dab into him. It knocked him over on his back and the wheels and the sprockets and the springs and the splinters went everywhere. The man jumped up, chagrined, and said, "Why in the world don't you watch where you're going?" The old drunk looked at him and said, "Aw, shut up. If you'd wear a wristwatch like ordinary people, you wouldn't have this kind of problem." It's not being at the right time at the right place. It's not being at the wrong place at the wrong time. It's learning that we can do something about our situation.

Now there are a lot of people who believe, I'm just living too fast and I can't do anything about it. I can't get in tune with God. I can't live by this lifestyle that you're talking about. I'm just running too fast.

I read the other day about hymns that you should sing at certain speeds as you're driving down the highway. If you're driving at 45 mph, you should sing, "God Will Take Care of Me." If you're driving at 65 mph, you should sing, "Nearer My God, To Thee." If you get up to 80 mph, you should sing, "Lord, I'm Coming Home." If you get up to 100 mph, you should sing, "Precious Memories" and that takes care of the whole situation.

Now here is Paul the apostle and he is really fighting for his life. He is making a testimony for his life. It is not a question of faith; it's not a question of the life, but it is a question of what is going on inside of him. It is not a question of your problems or your circumstances; it's not a question of your situations. It is a question of what's really going on in your life. Paul is saying, I strive to have a good conscience before God.

There were three things that they were charging him with. The first thing was that he was causing riots and disturbing the peace. The second thing was that he was heading up some kind of an insurrection group that was against Rome. The third thing was that he was desecrating the temple, that he was teaching a false doctrine in the temple.

You heard the reading of the scripture and Paul made it very clear that these charges were false and there was nothing against him that they could bring other than the one thing- that was that he preached the resurrection of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Now the thing that I like about Paul the apostle is this: he does not allow the world to have one quarter of his life. He is true to one part of himself and that is that part of himself that Christ is Lord of his life. Now hear me very carefully. If we as the church of the living God, if we as people that claim the power of the Holy Spirit are to be what God would have us to be in this life, we cannot get caught up in the way the world goes. We've got to begin to swim upstream and let this world know that there is a better way to live and that is Jesus Christ, the way, the truth and the life. We are called upon to give no quarter to the world. Well, praise the Lord. Praise him in this place.

What is Paul talking about when he says, I have a good conscience before the Lord? What we have to ask ourselves is, what is a conscience. You know, we live in a world of sociopathy, sociopathic behavior. A sociopathic person is a person who has no conscience, who has no sense of remorse, no sense of guilt, no sense of responsibility. He will be or do whatever he or she has to be or do to get what he or she really wants. You work with people every day who are like that. They do what they have to do to get what they want with no sense of conscience, no sense of guilt or sense of remorse. When you read about the things that you read about in the newspaper, you learn immediately that those people have no conscience. They have no sense of responsibility to the world.

Now what has happened in our day is what Paul talked about in 1 Timothy chapter 1, verse 5. He said that there are those people who have abandoned the faith. They have given heed to doctrines of devils and demons and they have followed after false teachings. Their conscience is seared.

Now if we talk about being made in the image of God, if we talk about God's Spirit being within us, then that means that there has to be a part of us that has a conscience before God. The conscience is inside of us the discriminator, between what is right and between what is wrong. The conscience in us is the radar, that enables us to be warned of when wrong things are happening inside of our lives. The conscience within us is the determiner of the presence of God in us that is violated whenever we find ourselves coming into a position of not being what God would have us to be.

Now in our generation, too many so-called Christians have learned how to put the voice of conscience aside. Let me tell you this evening that the most important thing that will ever happen in any person's life is when he learns to be sensitive to the spirit of God in him. When you learn to be sensitive to that spirit, then evil will have no place in your life. Amen, amen, and amen. Now praise God in this place.

In Genesis 1:27, God said that we are made in the image of God. Psalm 139:14 says that we are fearfully and wonderfully made. Psalm 8:5 says we have been made a little lower than the

angels. We are crowned with glory and honor and we've been given dominion over all things.

Now there is no way for that to operate until we begin to allow God's conscience to work in us. I find, in talking with so many people today, that they don't pay attention to themselves. They are not true to themselves. God has done the work in their lives, but they are not true to what God has done in their lives. They are more interested in pleasing this person or pleasing that person, or pleasing that idea or this idea, to go with the flow, to go with the crowd, to do what the world is saying to do- to look like the world, to be like the world, to claim the world, to accommodate the world. But now is the time for us to take a distinctive stand and let the world know, your ideologies have not worked and we've got a better way. Christ say here is the way and follow me. Amen, amen, and amen. Hallelujah. Well, praise the Lord in this place.

Let me say something to you young people in this congregation tonight. The most important thing about your life is not the way you look. It is not your IQ, it is not your talent, it is not your ability, it is not all the plans that you have, it is not all the great things that you can accomplish, but it is that inner voice in you that speaks in your heart that you allow God to speak and to show you the way. What has to happen today is that we have got to come into the exchanged life that I don't live my life for me. I allow Jesus Christ to live his life

through me. Amen, amen, and amen. Hallelujah. Well, praise God. Praise God forever.

That conscience has to first of all be programmed by the Word of God. You see, it is conditioned by everything that goes on in the world. Now if we are to live by the kind of conscience that is going to enable us to be the kind of people we need to be, then we've got to live with a conscience programmed by the Word. In I Timothy chapter 1, verse 5, Paul says, I have given you a commandment and that commandment that you don't give ear to the deceptive teaching that is all around you. This command is made in love and it is made in love through a pure heart, a good conscience and a sincere faith.

You see, whatever the program is, in our minds that becomes the program by which we live. Now what has to happen is that our minds have to be programmed by the Word of the living God. Your word have I hidden in my heart that I might not sin against you.

Now we are living in a day when many people don't see that it is necessary any longer to pray daily. They see it is not necessary any longer to go to church regularly. They don't see that it is necessary any longer to make a profession of their faith. They don't take any of the vitamins that God has available to them in the Word. Then they wonder why every little wind that comes along knocks them down.

Do you know what ought to be happening when you come to church to worship? Do you know what ought to be happening every

day when you pray and have devotion with the Lord? Do you know what ought to be happening when you read this Bible and this book even though you don't understand each concept? It is sharpening your conscience within you so that your voice inside of you is in tune with the voice of the living God, so when he speaks you know it is the voice of God and you can act on that voice. Amen, amen, and amen. Hallelujah. Well, praise the Lord.

You know, God shows us all kinds of things and gives us all kinds of things to do, but because our life is not programmed by the Word, then we have no resources to stand. When you get all down and out and there is nowhere else to turn, nothing else that you can get hold of, that's when the Word speaks the very loudest.

I can go back over my life and I can see that there were certain occasions, that had I made certain decisions, my life would have taken a completely different turn. On certain occasions, if I had made decisions, I might have been in prison here tonight. So many young people make a choice here or a choice there that alters the whole course of their lives. If each one of you could make a testimony here tonight, I would hear many testimonies saying, If I had done this, or I had not done that, or I had done the other thing. We made a choice and the reason that we made some of those choices is because we never listened to the voice of God in us because we never gave time for our conscience to speak to us. We get so caught up in the

appetites, we get so caught up in the worldly pressures, we get so caught up in what looks to be pleasant that we miss the very living word of God. There comes that time when you have to discipline your desires and listen to the discipline of the cross of Jesus Christ, for in the cross of Christ we have to glory. Amen, amen, and amen. Hallelujah. Well, praise God. Well, praise God. Well, praise God.

Well, you say Pastor Walker, I haven't heard you preach like that in a long time. No, and the reason that I am preaching like this tonight is because you need it. Amen, amen, and amen. Hallelujah.

Programmed conscience by the word of the living God.

You know, it is a tragedy how many times people try to find certain kinds of situations under certain kinds of terminologies and they think this is going to be the answer and that is going to be the answer. They try to do all kinds of things to make themselves feel better. But you are not going to find the answers in the happy hour. You're not going to find the answers in the bottom of the bottle. You're not going to find the answers in a syringe. You're not going to find the answers in a needle. You're not going to find the answers in pornography. You're not going to find the answers in infidelity. You're not going to find the answers in fleeting pleasure. There is only one place that you are going to find the answer and that is when your life becomes reconciled with the creator of your very being,

God the Father, through Jesus Christ the Son, by the power of the Holy Spirit that is in you that is greater than anything that is in the world. Amen, amen, and amen. Hallelujah be to God. Hallelujah be to God. Hallelujah be to God.

I guess I'm getting a little bit tired of talking to married couples who act like children, who've never grown up and never matured, who don't have that sense of responsibility to each other to allow the word of God to set the pace of their marriage. It's not really hard to live a true married life if you follow this book and this book says that you are to mutually submit yourselves to one another. Then husbands, you love your wives like Christ loved the church, and if you love your wife like Christ loved the church, then there is not a wife in this country who won't submit to you in the way the Bible says. Amen, amen, and amen. Hallelujah be to God.

Is this all right? Is this all right? Is this all right?

We have grown up too selfish and the reason that we've grown up selfish is because our conscience is not alive. We have learned to put it aside. We have learned to sear it with a hot iron. We have learned to not listen to the voice that speaks within us. We pay terrible prices for that. What we have to understand is that when we talk about this conscience God has given to us, that it is conditioned and needs to be conditioned by being energized by Jesus Christ himself.

You know, it is very difficult for people in the western world who stay so busy, to have time enough to allow Jesus Christ to really energize them. Most of us tonight, if we were being honest, we would talk about how tired we are most of the time. Fatigue is the number one problem in our country today. Chronic fatigue syndrome we talk about constantly here, there, yonder and in other ways. Do you know what the problem is? We don't have the source of energy that we need. Christ says in Matthew 11:28, come unto me all ye who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you what? I will give you [rest.] I will give you [rest.] Now where is that rest for the people of God? Oh my, we wring our hands in every little wind that blows and we get so uptight. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart and you shall find rest for your souls. Come for my yoke is easy and my burden is light, Christ says.

In Hebrews chapter 9, verse 14, it says the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses our conscience from every dead work that brings us into death, so that we might serve the true and the living God. Now what should happen in church, what should happen in your worship, what should happen in your devotion is that your conscience gets cleansed so you can get rid of all of the garbage- so all of the input that has been unlike the Father, unlike the Son and the Holy Spirit that has made you come under the depression and the guilt and the fear and the worry and the stress of the world, when you come to the cross of Jesus Christ

and his blood begins to cleanse and wash you clean and bring you into his rest, you go into another plane of living and you live in another kingdom and you go into another world because it is the world that belongs to God. Amen, amen, and amen. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Amen.

The problem with many of us is that we have only a one-dimensional world and that one-dimensional world is the world that the world lives in. I am praying tonight that somehow the Holy Spirit would get hold of your heart and break you through to a new dimensional world so that you won't have to complain about every ill will that blows, but you can rejoice in the Lord because he is your strength. Amen, amen, and amen. Hallelujah. Well, praise God. I don't know about you, but I'm kind of enjoying this.

The thing that bothers me is so many people run out of gas so easily and they give up so quickly because their conscience is not energized by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Not long ago, one of our college students who went to college on a football scholarship, prior to the practices beginning, went out with a group of boys one night. They made decisions to do certain things and to engage in certain behaviors and he refused to do it. They made all kinds of fun of him. They ridiculed him to the nth degree. But he said, down in my heart, my conscience was saying you are a believer. You are a child of God. He said, "Tapes of your sermons started running

through my mind. Most of them I didn't understand, but they kept running through my head nonetheless." He said, "I just kept hearing you say this and you say that and hearing you say the other." Finally he said, "Gentlemen, I'm about to lose my temper. Now this kid weighs about 240 pounds. He said, I don't want to do anything that will hurt anybody and I don't want to go and do what you're going to do. Let me out of this car." He got out of the car and had to walk 5 miles back to the dormitory. He walked back and the Lord put on his heart to pray for those other young men that were in that car. That night they got drunk, decided they would have some fun, went in to do a mock robbery within a 7-11 store just to have some fun. They were just going to play out a game. They didn't really mean to rob it. When they went in there, the man pulled out a shotgun and shot one of them dead and wounded another. Then they found themselves in the hospital. He called me on the phone and said, "I just want you to know that your preaching has not been in vain, that God put a conscience in me and Jesus Christ spoke to me and said that this is not the place for you to be and this is not the thing for you to do." Amen, amen, and amen. Hallelujah. Well, praise God. Praise God. Praise God. Well, praise him in this place. Amen, amen, and amen.

You know, we'd just save ourselves a whole lot of grief if we'd be energized by Christ in our conscience. If that sensitizer in us, if that radar unit in us, if that initiator of

the presence of the Holy Spirit in us, that part of God, that part of the divine that is in us, that part that separates us from the animal kingdom, if we would just listen to that and let the Spirit speak to our hearts and our lives, energized by Jesus Christ.

Now there is no way that we're going to make it in the days to come. It is not going to get better; it's going to get worse. The pressure is going to get worse. The difficulties are going to get worse.

I was in a conference not very long ago with a few pastors, all of whom had churches over 5,000. We were talking about our commonalities and we were talking about our problems. We were talking about our future and what we thought God was saying to the church. We all agreed on one fact: that probably the church is going to undergo persecution like it has never undergone before. We're going to find ourselves under pressures that we've never been under before.

Now the result of that is that when we begin to see that happening, it is going to separate the men from the boys. It is going to separate the wheat from the chaff.

Why are you preaching that way? I am saying to you that it is time for every church of God, every believer of every denomination who claims the lordship of Jesus Christ to stand on a solid rock and say, I don't care what the world does or where it goes, I know in whom I have believed and am persuaded that he

is able to keep that which I've committed unto him against that day. I will not be moved. Amen, amen, and amen. Hallelujah. Amen. Amen. Amen.

God is looking for some fathers who will stand up and be counted. God is looking for some mothers who will rock that cradle with a prayer on their lips. God is looking for some young people that will say, I'm not going to go the way the world wants me to go. I'm going to go the way that God is leading me. I'm going to live by his will and I'm going to allow his lordship to lead my life. I'm going to make my life count for him. Amen, amen, and amen. That's what the Lord is looking for. Hallelujah.

I get the feeling sometimes that God is tired of spiritual wimps. Amen. God is tired of people who are like a yo-yo. Up today and down tomorrow. God is tired of people who think that only God operates in their feelings. Some days you feel good; some days you feel bad. Some days you have euphoria; some days you have depression. Some days you get to work on time; some days you get there late. Some days the freeway is crowded; some days it is not. Some days you are able to pay all your bills; some days you're not. But 100 years from now when you stand before the presence of God, what difference will all of that make? Amen, amen, and amen. What difference will it make? Hallelujah.

When your life gets energized by the life of Jesus Christ, and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses your conscience from dead works that bring you into death, and enable you to serve the living God, then when you get into those kinds of binds and you get into those kinds of places, then you're not going to fold up like an accordion. You're going to stand up and God's going to give you the way out because he that is in you is greater than he that is in the world. Amen, amen, and amen. Hallelujah. Well, praise God. Hallelujah. Amen.

I haven't preached like this in years. This is the way I used to preach in camp meetings.

So the conscience is programmed by the Word, it is energized by Christ, but it is activated by the Holy Spirit. You know, there are a whole lot of folks who have never come out of Romans 7 into Romans 8. There are a lot of folks who still find themselves vacillating between the law of the members and the law of the mind. When Paul said there is a law in my members that is trying to bring me captive to the law of sin that is in my members and it is at war with the law that is in my mind. Oh wretched man, who will deliver me from this body of death? His answer was, thanks be unto Jesus who gives us a victory through our Lord Jesus Christ- thanks be unto God who gives us a victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. In Romans 8:1, there is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit; for the spirit of life

in Christ has made us free from the spirit of death. Once you come into that, you understand Romans 8:6. To be carnally minded is death but to be spiritually minded is life and it is peace.

Now that's the big choice that every young person in this congregation will make tonight- whether you live your life by carnality or you live your life by spirituality- whether you live your life by the way that the world wants you to live your life or you live your life by the way that the Spirit wants you to live your life.

Now the activating force in the conscience is the spirit of God himself and that spirit in you can be greater than any spirit that is in the world. When we talk about being activated by the Holy Spirit, then you see how a man like the apostle Paul could come into the power that he came into. In Acts 21 he was arrested and put in jail for preaching the gospel. In Acts 23 there was a plot against his life, to try to assassinate him. They took him down to Caesarea-by-the-Sea where he could have this trial. In Acts 24 he comes to the trial and he says, I am striving to have a good conscience before God. That conscience was activated by the Holy Spirit. He sat around there for over two years. Finally he appealed to Caesar. From 61 A.D. to 64 A.D., he was chained to guards, probably in an apartment in Rome. He was loose for a little while, then brought back from 65-68 A.D. to be put into what was probably the Mammertine Prison, a dungeon underneath the ground. Carmelita and I visited it

several years ago. You look down through about a 2 foot square hole and down below is a big cavern. No light. The only air that is coming in is through that top hole. Probably for 2-3 years that is where he spent his life and that may be, with a candle, where he wrote many of his epistles, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, activated by the Holy Spirit, guided by the Holy Spirit.

Now what we've got to understand is that God is calling for action out of his people. Sometimes I can't rest very well because I know the great need. No wonder the Bible tells us that the harvest is plenty, but the laborers are few, and to pray that God will call people into the harvest. There is a loss of urgency in so many people's hearts and lives. There is a loss of burden for those around us who do not really know Jesus Christ. Each one of us here tonight is called upon to be an evangelist, to reach the private world where we live. So many of us have lost that sense of concern and that sense of urgency and that sense of real responsibility.

I'd like for you to leave here tonight with a new burden. I'd like you to leave here tonight with a new determination that somehow God is going to operate in your life in a way that you have never seen him operate before.

I'm going to give an altar call in just a few moments, particularly for young people, because I want to pray with you that God will put a radar system in you that is going to help you

to make it- that after you leave this church and you go out into the world and you go to other cities perhaps, and your businesses take you other places and your careers take you other places and colleges take you other places, that you might look back on this message this night and you might always check out whether you have striven for a good conscience before God.

For you see, the final decision rest on what is going on inside of each one of us. We are masters of deceit. We are masters of being able to put on the facade, but God looks through the facade and right into our hearts and he knows exactly what the very secrets of our hearts really are. Tonight there has to be a time in our lives when we begin to open up to God the things that we don't open up to anybody else and we allow him to work in our lives in a new and a special way such as he has never worked before.

Admiral Halsey was a great admiral, prior to his retirement. When he was choosing the officers that would go with him on the big ships that he was captaining, he would always have them come in for an interview. His interviews were famous, because when he called his officers in for an interview he would have his back to them and they would just sit there 20 or 30 minutes before he would ever talk to them. Then he would turn around and ask them a lot of strange questions. It was a trembling, fearful kind of interview to go into.

One officer writes about the fact that he was dreading that interview. He went in and sat there for nearly 20 minutes. The admiral had his back to him, then he turned around and looked at him. He said, "Tell me about yourself." He started out talking about his life and everything that was going on. He said, "I finally got to the fact that I'd graduated from the Naval Academy. I told him, 'I graduated in the top 5%.' I thought that would impress him. I had been talking for 15-20 minutes when I got to that point. The admiral looked into my eyes and said, 'Did you always do your best?' I said, 'Well, admiral sir, I can't say that I always did my best.' Then he looked at me again in the eyes and said, 'Why not?' He flipped his chair around and turned his back to me and I knew that the interview was over." Why not? Why not? Why not?

As our heads are bowed and our eyes are closed...

HOW CAN I SHARE THE KINGDOM?

Mat: 4:19 → Come, follow me → I will make you fishes of men.

I. DEFINE THE PARAMETERS.

Personality ←  
6 mit dellen  
P. 8: 8: 5, 6.

- A. The Kingdom is inside/outside (Luke 17:21; Ephesians 4:13).
- B. The Kingdom is here/now (Matthew 4:17; Matthew 10:7).
- C. The Kingdom is then/there (Matthew 25:34; Matthew 26:29; John 18:36).

Personality  
2d. level.  
Person.  
↳ no of the  
world.

II. DETERMINE THE COMMITMENT.

Keynotes  
What is  
a sign?

- A. A genuine concern for the lost (Psalm 126:6; Romans 9:2).
- B. An understanding of Scripture (Acts 17:11; I Timothy 2:15).
- C. A sensitivity to the Spirit (Romans 8:16).
- D. A recognition of human need (Acts 8:30; Acts 17:23; John 4:7).
- E. A trust in the power of the Word (2 Timothy 2:14, 15; 1 Peter 1:24, 25).
  - 1. Because it is inspired by God (2 Timothy 3:16).
  - 2. Because it penetrates the heart (Hebrews 4:12).
  - 3. Because it endures forever (Matthew 24:35).
- F. An avoidance of foolish controversy by exaltation of Christ (2 Timothy 2:23; John 4).
- G. A scriptural motive for witnessing--"to know Christ and the power of his resurrection" (Philippians 3:10; 1 Corinthians 1:30).

↳ no of the  
world.  
Vuln. Paul. Talmon  
even  
Word is  
need.  
Supplies  
Good Samaritan

III. DISCOVER THE PLACE.

B. → Keynotes → Acts 2:16-39

- 1) 16-18 → Fulfilling of H.S. is fulfillment of prophecy
- 2) 21 → Opportunity for salvation is universal
- 3) 22-30 → Christ is Lord: // Divine / Crucified / Resurrected / Exalted / Returned
- 4) 38 → Repentance + baptism necessary for admission from sin.
- 5) 38, 39 → Opportunity for rec. gift of H.S. is universal.

## MY ATTITUDES FOR TODAY

Just for today:

1. I WILL TRY TO LIVE THROUGH THIS DAY ONLY, and not set far reaching goals to try to overcome all my problems at once. I know I can do something in 12 hours that would appall me if I felt that I had to keep it up for a lifetime.
2. I WILL TRY TO BE HAPPY. Abraham Lincoln said, "Most folks are about as happy as they make up their minds to be." He was right. I will not dwell on thoughts that depress me. I will chase them out of my mind and replace them with happy, joyful thoughts about the Lord.
3. I WILL ADJUST MYSELF TO WHAT IS. I will face reality. I will try to change those things that I can change; and accept those things that I cannot change.
4. I WILL TRY TO IMPROVE MY MIND. I will not be a mental loafer. I will force myself to read something that requires effort (the Bible), thought and concentration.
5. I WILL EXERCISE MY SOUL IN THREE WAYS:
  - A. I will do a good deed for someone--without letting him know it. (If he or she finds out, it will not count).
  - B. I will do at least two things that I know I should do, but have been putting off.
  - C. I will not show anyone that my feelings are hurt. They may be hurt, but for today I will not show it.
6. I WILL BE AGREEABLE AND POSITIVE. I will look for the best side of everything and praise God for it, and I will not concern myself with the bad side of anything. I will look as well as I can, dress becomingly, talk softly, act courteously, and speak ill of no one. Just for today I'll try to improve no one except myself.
7. I WILL HAVE A SCHEDULE OR PROGRAM. I may not follow it exactly, but I will have it, thereby saving myself from two pests: HURRY and INDECISION.
8. I WILL HAVE A QUIET HALF HOUR WITH GOD. I will relax in Him. During this time I will reflect on my behavior and will try to get a better perspective of my life and its purpose.
9. I WILL BE UNAFRAID. I will gather the courage to do what is right and I will take the responsibility for my own actions. I will expect nothing from the world, but I will realize that as I give to the world, the world will give to me.

## Elemental

1. I can't
2. If
3. Doubt
4. I don't think
5. I don't have  
time
6. Maybe
7. I'm afraid of
8. I don't believe
9. (maybe) I
10. It's impossible

## Cultured

1. I can
2. I will
3. Expect the  
best
4. I know
5. I will  
make the time
6. Positively
7. I am  
confident
8. I do  
believe
9. (promise)  
you-
10. God is  
able.