



A Conscience Sprinkled Clean | Receiving Forgiveness.

During these times of quiet reflection, we're asking two basic questions: What do I want to ask of the Lord, and what does He want to say to me at this time. We then wait, listening for His response. Let these questions guide your reflections and help you identify the things you want to process with the Lord. Take time to quiet your mind. Ask the Lord to help you hear what He is saying, and to give you freedom to pour out whatever is on your heart.

JOURNALING ■ The value of this journaling time is that we can open the door to these subtopics and along the way, highlight what we want to revisit in the days to come. These questions are drawn from our topic and from Hebrews 10:12-17; 19-23, and Ephesians 3:17b-19.

1. What has spoken most meaningfully to you through the stories shared this morning? Take a few minutes to pray, or journal about your impressions before going on to the other questions.

a. Of the six who shared about His work in their lives, which story was most significant to you. Why?

b. Ask for an awareness of what does not feel right. We can have little pockets of our lives where hurts, wounds, etc. remain open until we bring it before the Lord.

c. Ask the Lord what in your life or history needs His cleansing. Let the Lord speak to you in the context of your life and your relationship with Him. He alone knows our hearts and histories. You may want to use the list below as a guide.

Ephesians 3:17b-19 ~ And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love,¹⁸ may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ,¹⁹ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

1. Asking the Lord to help me see the true image of God. What has been wrong about the way I see that image?

2. Lord, show me where I have a hidden sin, or one at this time that I have not seen as a sin.

3. Where do I need to accept your correction at this time?

4. Help me to recognize where my conscience needs to be more responsive to your guidance.

- Tender, sensitive conscience vs. a hardened or unresponsive conscience

2. **OUR CLEAN CONSCIENCE** - *Use the attached handout.* There are six areas in which we may have closed off the work of the Lord in our soul, and in our relationship with Him. Ask the Lord to help you see what He is waiting to heal. As Chris said at the beginning of the morning, the sins and issues we want the Lord to free us from can have roots we're not aware of.

Ask for the Lord's direction in identifying which, if any of these, apply to you.

- a) *Grace* is the focus of number six on this list. The woman who shared this morning about how she had resisted His grace found out how wonderful it was to finally receive it.

~ Ask the Lord for a deeper understanding of the grace of God in **your** life — in the context of your walk with Him. Take a few minutes to listen for what He you need to understand.

- b) What the Lord wants to give us: **faith** so that we will keep our roots in the soil of His love.
(see Ephes. 3:17b-19)

~ How does the Lord want to help me grasp the dimensions of His love for me?
[You may want to take a few minutes in His presence — just soaking in that love.]

~ What do I want bring to the Cross today?

ALL THINGS NEW – Elizabeth Sherrill Acknowledging Sin | We were baptized therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. ^{Rns 6:4.} ✚ In the *Book of Common Prayer*, there's one petition I especially love: *Grant that we may ever hereafter serve and please thee in newness of life.* Newness of life—life forever fresh as morning, wonderstruck as childhood. ✚ But, oh, dear! These words so full of promise are only part of a prayer that also contains some of my least favorite phrases. *We Acknowledge and bewail our manifold sin and wickedness, by thought, word, and deed.* Why focus on negatives? I wanted to hurry on to the new life, not get stuck at old defeats. ✚ Then one Lent, I noticed that every Bible reading in my daily lectionary dealt with repentance. I decided that all those verses had to be there for a purpose. I noticed, too, that when a biblical figure repented, it was always for a specific sin. Not just “manifold sins and wickedness,” but the time yesterday when I crossed the street to avoid meeting a woman who talks for half an hour (she lives alone). The resentment that flared last night when I saw a commercial for a certain department store (the billing error it refused to correct happened twenty years ago.) ✚ Making repentance specific, current and daily, I've come to appreciate the wisdom that shaped that ancient petition. When I recall and confess the unkind thought, the careless word, the selfish deed “most grievously committed,” I'm allowing it to fall away and be buried. And out of this prepared ground, God brings newness. New warmth in a relationship. New tolerance for failure, my own and others'. New freedom. God makes new, not by ignoring my sin, but by shining the light of His forgiveness upon it. ✚ *Grant that I may serve and please You this day, Father, in newness of life.*

Hebrews 10:12-17; 19-23

¹² But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, ¹³ waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. ¹⁴ For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified. ¹⁵ And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying, ¹⁶ **“This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws on their hearts, and write them on their minds,”** then he adds, **“I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more.”**

Vs 19-23 ~¹⁹ Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, ²¹ and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²² **let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.** ²³ **Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.**