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Jesus Talks To Us Through Our Consciences

Several years ago I read some books, which contained wonderful truths. But I found a number of points on which I became confused.

The author talked about the spirit, soul and body. The soul and body are the outer man, he explained, and the spirit is the inner man. Christ dwells in our spirit, in the inner man.

As I read about the outer man and the inner man, I began to get upset because I didn't really understand it from a practical point of view.

One day I got so upset that I said, "Lord, I have to know more about this, because if I don't know this, I know nothing."

So I put my head down on the top of my desk and I said, "Lord, I want to find out what is my flesh, what is my soul, and what is my spirit." I didn't have any problem with my flesh. I could touch my physical body. And I knew that my soul is my intelligence, my ability to think and feel.

"But where is my spirit?" I asked myself. I could individualize my body and my psyche, but not my spirit. I couldn't find it.

The soul and the spirit are very close. However, there is a difference between them because the Scripture says that the Word of God parts the soul from the spirit. But the more I tried to understand what is the soul and what is the spirit, the more confused I became.

Another day I said to myself, "I will start the other way. Instead of using the deductive method, I will use the inductive one. I will start from the inside."

So I asked myself, "What is the most inward thing that I am conscious of having?"

Well, the most private, inner part of my being that I knew of was my conscience. I decided to look into the Bible to see what it said about the conscience.

Try it sometime. Make a Bible study of the conscience. You will find that the conscience is the spirit of a man.

God made within us a room for Himself. This room is our conscience. The New Testament uses the words "conscience" and "spirit" interchangeably. For instance, Paul said, "I serve God with a clean conscience." He also said, "The Spirit gives testimony to our conscience."

When I speak of the conscience, everybody knows what I am talking about. But when I say "spirit," it isn't clear what I mean. And if our spirit is our center from which we are to live, it has to be clear to us what it is. So I found that the conscience is our spirit.

Now immediately someone is going to say to me, "Brother Ortiz, you cannot be led by your conscience because everyone's conscience tells him something different."

I said a moment ago that the conscience is a room for God Himself to dwell in. When He is not there, the conscience takes the shape of all the other things we feed it.

If you grow up in a Buddhist country, your conscience takes a Buddhist form and dictates to you Buddhist thinking.

If you are raised in a Catholic family, your conscience is shaped by the Catholic faith. A Catholic brother has no problem with kneeling in front of an image and honoring that image, which is a symbol of a saint, because his conscience allows him to.

Your conscience will always take on the context in which you live. So if you are in a home where you continually are exposed to curse words and stealing as a way of life, you will

grow up accepting that as normal.

The conscience is shaped in such a way by our schools today that some children say, "But Daddy, free sex is perfectly normal."

I was riding in a taxi in Buenos Aires one time, and the taxi driver was very talkative.

"I used to have an apartment for my woman," he explained, "and now I cannot afford the apartment any more because of inflation. I don't know what life is coming to with all of the economic problems."

He spent the next ten minutes telling me about the things he did in that apartment. Eventually I said, "Listen, do you think that everybody is like you?"

He looked at me rather curiously and said, "What do you mean?"

"I mean that when I married my wife, that was the first woman I ever knew, and I knew her the first day we were married. I have never been involved with any other women."

He looked at me as if to say, "From which planet are you?" It seemed quite normal to him to have a woman on the side because that is the way his conscience had been shaped.

I was brought up in a Pentecostal church, so my conscience was shaped by the Pentecostal doctrine.

We could not smoke, of course, nor drink; and it was not permissible to listen to the radio. It was considered all right to swim with all your clothes on; but since that would not have been too comfortable and it was sinful to wear a swimming suit, we never swam.

We were not allowed to whistle. So I never learned to whistle. Even today I can't. Had I tried to whistle, my conscience would have accused me because it had been shaped that way. Perhaps you laugh at that. But you also were shaped in some way that is not right.

You may have a Presbyterian conscience, so if you fall into sin you know that you are still going to be saved since you believe in once saved, always saved.

If you are an Arminian, your conscience will tell you that you can fall and be lost, needing to be saved again, every day.

The Bible says that the blood of Jesus will cleanse our conscience from dead works. One day I realized that just as the people of the world need to be cleansed from drug addiction, sexual abuse and all kinds of other sins, I also needed to be cleansed of Pentecostalism.

My conscience was not made for Pentecostalism, just as yours was not made for Presbyterianism or whatever religion you have been involved in. It was made so that Jesus might dwell there. It was created to be indwelt by a Person, not a concept.

From the time I asked Jesus to cleanse me, He went to work on me. The first thing that happened was that I started to love everybody. Before, I did not love Catholics; in fact, I preached against them. When I said, "Jesus, cleanse me," I started to love the Catholics. As a result, they began to receive me.

Jesus talks to us through our conscience.

We are built with a system of communications within us, and the conscience is there to speak to us. Actually, the conscience speaks much more quickly than the mind. Before the mind understands, the conscience already has said, "No!" or "Yes." This is what we call intuition.

When we ask Christ to come into our heart, His Spirit becomes one with our spirit. He takes command of our intuition. So when we are going to criticize somebody, He tells us, "Don't do it."

Someone listening to me says, "What were you going to say about so-and-so, Brother Ortiz?"

And I answer, "Oh, just what a wonderful person he is."

In my heart I say, "Thank You, Lord. Alleluia! I didn't say it." And I feel good inside, because I followed the voice of the Master as He spoke to me through my intuition.

The problem is that we mix our conscience with the mind.

So when the conscience says, "Give a hundred dollars," we pass the order to our office to be approved. We think it over in our mind.

Now my mind tells me, "You already have given a hundred dollars to that person. Don't you remember? He didn't use it properly. Why should you give him a hundred dollars this time? You had better not give him anything."

So I decide not to give him anything, and I quench the Spirit.

To quench the Spirit is not just to tell a person who is speaking in tongues, "Shut up." No, to quench the Spirit is to disobey that inner voice.

We are married to Jesus, our Husband, who lives within us, and He helps us in all of life by speaking to us through our intuition. So if we obey His inner voice we are living in His will. "For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God" (Romans 8:14). This is what it means to walk in the Spirit—to be led by Christ through our intuition.

On Easter morning, a lady sang that beautiful hymn to which we already referred, "He lives, He lives, Christ Jesus lives today; and He walks with me, and talks with me, along life's narrow way. He lives, He lives, salvation to impart. You ask me how I know He lives? He lives within my heart."

Everybody applauded the beautiful way in which she sang. After the service, another lady came to her and said, "Sister, what did He tell you?"

"What?" said the singer, looking puzzled.

"What did He tell you the last time He talked to you?" the lady persisted.

"What on earth are you talking about?"

"The last time you talked with Him and He talked to you, what did you talk about?"

"Who?" said the singer.

"Jesus. The last time you talked to Him and He talked to you, what did you talk about?"

"What? Me talking to Jesus? You are crazy! Jesus didn't talk to me. Be careful, Sister. If you think that Jesus talks with you, be careful. It could be your flesh, or it could be Satan. People can be misled. We should just read the Bible and follow that."

"But listen, you said, 'and He walks with me and talks with me____' "

"Oh, but that is just a song. He doesn't really talk to me."

"Then why did you sing it?"

"Well, because it's in the hymn book."

No wonder we can't convince unbelievers that Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. If we sing something just because it's in the book, we will never convince anybody.

Once I was in Lincoln Cathedral in England. It is a tremendous building, almost 700 feet long, with an organ in the middle of it. And the English people really know how to do liturgy beautifully. The choir and the ministers were all dressed up in long robes.

I was to offer a prayer during the service. So I thought to myself, "That Cathedral, with all that ceremony... I will do a nice prayer."

When I stood up I said, "O Most High and Holy Father, I come into Your presence this morning____"

About that time He told me, "Johnny, shut up! We have been talking all day long and now you come with this, 'High and Holy Father.'"

I said, "Lord, listen. Let me finish this official prayer, then we will continue our conversation. But I can't stop in the middle of this now that I've started."

"Well, go on," He said. (He realized that I was in a predicament!)

Jesus is tired of the protocol. All of that "Heavenly Father, O Most High" protocol comes out of the old covenant. But we are Jesus' wife. And I would never say to my wife, "O Heavenly Martha, I come into your presence."

God is hungry for friendship. He wants to seat us on His lap and have us call Him, "Daddy." That is what *Abba* means. "Friendship with Jesus, fellowship divine."

I want to prove to you that God speaks to you.

Take a piece of paper and draw two lines on it so that you divide it into three columns. Draw a line across the top. Above this line put three titles, one on each column. Above the first put, "God said." Above the second put, "I did." Then above the third put, "Result." Do it when you get up in the morning.

So when you take a shower and you get the bathroom floor wet, if God says to you, "Get the mop," put that down in the first column.

Then put down, "I did it."

Under the third column, "Joy and peace."

If God says, "Hang up those coats" while you are getting dressed, write it down.

Then put, "I hung them up."

Under result, "Joy and peace."

Then under "God said" write, "Go back and kiss your wife."

In the second column put down, "I didn't."

Result: "No result—consequences."

God said, "Don't say that about your brother." I said it.
Result: Unrest.

Don't tell me that you don't know what I am talking about.

You know that the Lord speaks to you like this. The problem is that in our religious system we were taught that the only way God speaks to us is through the Bible. But the Bible tells us what I am telling you. It has all kinds of stories of God speaking to people. And it tells us that He also will speak to us.

When the Spirit tells you, "Clean up the bathroom," you say, "Where does the Bible say I have to clean the bathroom?"

Or when the Spirit tells you, "Give ten dollars to that man," you answer, "The Bible says it's not by works, it's by faith."

If you are all alone, with no telephone close to you, and you have to make a decision, do what that inner voice tells you.

But let me give you a word of advice: You are not independent; you belong to a family of believers. If you think that the Lord is telling you to sell your house and give the money to a ministry, the same Christ in your brothers will tell them the same thing, so ask them for a confirmation. It is a simple matter of safety to check with others with whom you have fellowship and who live by the same inner guidance of the Spirit.

I am not giving you a philosophy; I am giving you something that is life to me. It works. So don't sing, "He lives, He lives, Christ Jesus lives today," because it is in the hymn book. Sing it because you know that He lives within your heart.

You may be able to find all kinds of faults with what I am saying.

We are all human. None of us walks in the Spirit perfectly. But get the heart of my message and begin to hear from the Spirit yourself.

You will make mistakes because we all do. But you will increasingly learn to walk in the will of God as Jesus leads you through the Spirit within.