**SERMON OUTLINE**

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| **SERMON TITLE:** | Haunted by the Ghost of Guilt |
| **SERMON REFERENCE:** | Zechariah 3:1-4 |
| **LWF SERMON NUMBER:** | #2188 |
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1. INTRODUCTION
   1. Many people are haunted by the ghost of guilt.
      1. They do not have the freedom that they should have in the Lord Jesus Christ.
   2. In this message, we will learn from the Word of God how to lay down the burden of guilt and how to begin every morning free, without dragging yesterday into today.
   3. Here is the background in the book of Zechariah:
      1. Joshua is the high priest.
         1. He represents the people of God.
         2. He has a problem.
      2. Zechariah 3:1
         1. The angel of the Lord, who is the messenger of Yahweh, is an Old Testament description of Jesus.
         2. In this passage, the word “angel” literally means “messenger.”
            1. Jesus is the messenger of Yahweh, the God of the covenant.
         3. The high priest is standing before Jesus.
         4. The word “Satan” means “adversary.”
      3. Zechariah 3:2-4
         1. This passage is talking about Joshua the high priest.
         2. All of us are as “a brand plucked out of the fire.”
            1. If it had not been for Jesus, then an eternal Hell would be our destiny.
   4. Many people today have denied sin, but they have not been able to get rid of the ghost of guilt.
      1. They have renamed sin.
         1. No longer are people sinful; they are sick.
         2. No longer are they wicked, but they are weak.
         3. No longer are they evil, but they are ill.
   5. Jesus did not die for mistakes.
      1. He died for sin.
   6. Until we deal with sin, we will never get rid of the ghost of guilt.
      1. Some are haunted by a misspent youth and missed opportunities.
      2. Some are haunted by neglected duty.
      3. We all need someone who can undo some things that we have done.
         1. That person is Jesus.
   7. In Zechariah 3, we have a courtroom scene, which will be the focus of today’s message.
      1. There is the accused.
      2. There is the adversary, who is the prosecuting attorney.
      3. There is the advocate, who is the lawyer.
2. the accused (zechariah 3:3)
   1. Joshua stands for the people.
      1. If we were to bring this into today’s setting, then he would stand for us.
         1. When we look at any passage of Scripture, we should ask:
            1. What did it mean then?
            2. How does it apply today?
            3. How does it apply to me personally?
      2. He was the high priest.
         1. The high priest stood for the people.
      3. In a very real sense, he is representing us.
   2. Joshua, as the accused, had to plead guilty.
      1. Zechariah 3:3
         1. The word “Satan” means “adversary,” and he had a good case against Joshua.
         2. He is dressed in filthiness.
            1. This is a picture of anyone who is not dressed in the righteousness of the Lord Jesus.
      2. Joshua had no defense.
         1. He was obviously guilty.
            1. This is what the Bible says concerning all of us.

Romans 3:19

* + - 1. The very first thing that we must do with our sin is to admit our guilt.
         1. As the accused, we must always plead guilty as charged.
  1. What is guilt?
     1. Guilt is not a feeling.
        1. If we put our hand on a hot stove, then we are going to get a feeling and a burn.
           1. The burn and the feeling are two different things.
        2. Many people are dealing with guilt feelings.
           1. Just as the burn is the raw flesh and blisters, the guilt is that which causes the feeling.

But the guilt is not the feeling.

* + - 1. Our conscience may make us feel guilty when we are not guilty.
         1. Our conscience is like a thermostat.

It will function wherever it is set.

* + - 1. Sometimes we may be guilty and not feel that we are.
    1. Guilt is a reality.
       1. It is the result of the filthiness of our sin.
    2. Guilt can cause all kinds of emotional and physical baggage.
       1. Guilt brings anxiety and depression.
       2. It can make us physically ill.
          1. Psalm 32:3

David was actually groaning in his sickness.

* + 1. Guilt will bring spiritual sterility.
       1. The person who is haunted by the ghost of guilt is not driven to God.
          1. A person with unresolved guilt is driven further away from God.
    2. Many people are into things that they ought not to be into simply because of guilt.
       1. A person may turn to alcohol to kill the pain of his guilt.
       2. No psychologist can deal with guilt apart from the Word of God.
          1. They cannot take away one particle of guilt.

Only God can do that.

* + - * 1. They may help someone deal with the pain, but they cannot deal with the burn.
    1. Not only can guilt bring emotional and physical illness, but there is that bitterness that causes us to pour out venom on other people when we ourselves are guilty.
       1. We take our own problem and project it onto someone else when they have not done anything wrong.
    2. Sometimes people just simply try to forget that they have done wrong.
       1. They think that there is a statute of limitations on what they have done.
          1. They think that somehow it will resolve itself, but it never will.
    3. Sometimes people turn to amusement.
       1. The word “amuse” means “not to think.”
       2. We are amusing ourselves into Hell because we don’t want to face guilt.
    4. Many turn to alcohol to try to drown their problems, but it doesn’t work.
    5. Sometimes people try suicide.
       1. Suicide is never the answer.
       2. It is the most selfish thing a person could do.
       3. It is no solution at all.
       4. It is the ultimate act of a lack of faith and the ultimate act of selfishness.
          1. It is a way of saying that the problem is too big for God.
    6. We have to learn how to deal with guilt.
  1. It is obvious, according to Zechariah 3:3, that Joshua was wrong.
  2. There is one thing that God will not accept for sin, and that is an alibi or an excuse.
     1. Jesus did not die for alibis or excuses.
  3. As the accused, we must plead guilty.
     1. Not until we plead guilty can we deal with this ghost of guilt.

1. the adversary (zechariah 3:1)
   1. Zechariah 3:1
      1. The word “Satan” means “adversary.”
   2. We have an adversary.
      1. He is very real.
      2. His name is Satan.
      3. He comes against us like he has no one else to come against.
      4. Don’t get the idea that there are only some people who have Satan for an adversary.
         1. We all have him for an adversary.
   3. Satan is pictured in the Bible as a prosecuting attorney.
      1. Revelation 12:10
      2. He is accusing us.
         1. He has plenty to accuse us about at any time.
   4. Satan is the accuser of the brethren.
      1. One would think that Satan would want to hide our sin, but he does not want to hide our sin.
         1. He wants us to sin and then suffer the consequences.
            1. He wants to cripple us and then blame us for limping.
            2. He wants us to be doubly defeated.
   5. Satan the accuser is also Satan the enticer.
      1. He will whisper to us to go ahead and commit that sin.
         1. He will tell us that we can get away with it.
      2. Then, he will shout at us and accuse us for the very sin he enticed us to do.
         1. Not only will he accuse us before God, but he will also accuse us to our face because he wants us to suffer.
   6. We need to learn the difference between accusation and conviction.
      1. The Holy Spirit is the convicter.
         1. He will convict us of sin.
      2. The devil is the adversary.
         1. He will accuse us of sin.
      3. Accusation comes from Satan.
         1. It causes us to feel hopeless and helpless.
            1. Judas, who betrayed the Lord, was filled with so much remorse that he committed suicide.

The remorse did not draw him back to Jesus.

It drove him from Jesus.

In trying to escape the Hell within him, he dropped into the Hell before him.

Matthew 27:3-5

Acts 1:16-18

* + 1. True conviction draws us to the Lord.
       1. It helps us to see sin for what it is.
       2. It causes brokenness that causes us not only to be broken over our sin, but to be broken from our sin.
          1. Simon Peter was convicted of his sin when he denied the Lord.

He wept bitterly, and God restored him.

Matthew 26:75

John 21:15-17

* + - 1. 2 Corinthians 7:10
         1. There is an ungodly sorrow that brings remorse.
         2. When we have Godly sorrow, we repent.

God saves us and delivers us.

* + - * 1. Many people have the ghost of guilt, and the sorrow of the world works in them death.

It may be spiritual death.

* 1. Satan wants us to focus our attention on our sin, ourselves, and on him.
     1. He wants us to focus on anything but Jesus.
     2. He wants us to live under the dark cloud of guilt and despair.
        1. Some churches even major on guilt.
           1. We may preach about sin, but we shouldn’t major on guilt.
     3. Guilt that does not bring true conviction and repentance but brings remorse and beats people down becomes a tool of the devil.
  2. 2 Corinthians 2:10-11
     1. Some people can become so burdened down with guilt that Satan can get an advantage over that person.
        1. Satan is very wily and shrewd, even in using guilt.

1. the advocate (zechariah 3:1-5)
   1. Zechariah 3:1-2
      1. Joshua may have sinned, but he had been redeemed.
      2. The Lord stood as his advocate.
   2. 1 John 2:1
      1. The word “advocate” is another name for “lawyer.”
         1. We have a lawyer to plead our case.
         2. We have an advocate with the Father.
            1. He is Jesus Christ the Righteous.
   3. Jesus never defends His children’s sins, but He does defend His children.
      1. He never makes it easy on sin.
         1. Even when He forgives, He may chasten.
      2. If we are saved, then we will never stand before God to be judicially judged for our sins.
      3. It is Jesus, who is our defense attorney, who stands against the accuser.
   4. Jesus defends us on the basis of His redeeming grace.
      1. When Jesus died on the cross, He said that it was finished.
         1. John 19:30
      2. We should thank God for the unfinished work of Jesus.
         1. Hebrews 7:25
            1. He is able to save us all the way through.

He will never lose us.

* + - * 1. He saves us to the uttermost because saving grace is securing grace.
        2. He ever lives to make intercession for us.
    1. We have a defense attorney, an advocate.
  1. People think that they can deal with guilt through education, psychology, and therapy.
     1. But nothing can wash away our sins except the blood of Jesus.
     2. The blood of Jesus totally and completely forgives and cleanses.
  2. Romans 8:33-34
     1. There is no court on Earth that can justify.
        1. If someone is guilty, then the court condemns him.
        2. If someone is not guilty, then the court acquits him.
        3. No court can say that someone is guilty and then make that person righteous.
           1. Only God can do that.
  3. Hebrews 7:25
  4. Zechariah 3:2-5
     1. Not only does the Lord rebuke the accuser, but He also restores the accused.
     2. A turban was placed on his head.
        1. “Holy to the Lord” was written on the turban.
           1. Exodus 28:36
     3. Not only does the Lord take away our filthy garments, but He also clothes us with His righteousness and His purity.
        1. 1 John 1:9

1. what should we do when we are haunted by the ghost of guilt? (1 John 1:9)
   1. Consider the source.
      1. Is this guilt real, or is it manufactured?
      2. Is it Holy Spirit conviction?
      3. Is it Satanic accusation or just psychological wrong thinking?
   2. If there is sin, confess it.
      1. 1 John 1:9
         1. This verse says, “If we confess our sins.”
            1. It does not say, “If we confess our sin,” singular.
      2. Name our sins.
         1. Call sin by its first name.
         2. The Holy Spirit will convict us specifically.
            1. He will not convict us of sin that has already been forgiven.
      3. We will never have peace until we confess our sins.
      4. The word “confess” literally means “to say the same thing.”
         1. It means to say about our sin what God says about it.
            1. We are to agree with God.
      5. Psalm 139:23
      6. Psalm 19:12
         1. Sometimes it is painful when God shows us our secret faults.
      7. Matthew 6:22
         1. There is nothing lurking in the shadows.
         2. We can know that we are free when there is nothing between us and God or between us and another person.
   3. Claim the solution.
      1. Don’t be haunted by the ghost of guilt.
         1. That sin now is buried in the grave of God’s forgetfulness, and God has crowned us with a turban that says, “Holy to the Lord.”
2. CONCLUSION
   1. Have you ever thought about what it means to be clean?
      1. To know that there is nothing between your soul and the Savior?
   2. Joshua had been saved, but he had that old filthy garment.
   3. The accused represents us.
   4. The accuser is Satan, the adversary.
   5. The advocate is the Lord Jesus Christ.
      1. 1 John 2:1
         1. He has never lost a case.
   6. Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
   7. Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
      1. Romans 3:23
      2. Romans 10:9-10
      3. Romans 10:13
      4. Acts 16:31
      5. John 3:16