

## SERMON OUTLINE

**SERMON TITLE:** Haunted by the Ghost of Guilt

**SERMON REFERENCE:** Zechariah 3:1-4

**LWF SERMON NUMBER:** #2188

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1) INTRODUCTION

- a) Many people are haunted by the ghost of guilt.
  - i) They do not have the freedom that they should have in the Lord Jesus Christ.
- b) 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.
- c) Here is the background in the book of Zechariah:
  - i) Joshua is the high priest.
    - (1) He represents the people of God.
    - (2) He has a problem.
  - ii) 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.”
      - (a) 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.”
  - iii) 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.”
      - (a) If it had not been for Jesus, then an eternal Hell would be our destiny.
- d) Many people today have denied sin, but they have not been able to get rid of the ghost of guilt.
  - i) 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.
- e) Jesus did not die for mistakes.
  - i) He died for sin.
- f) Until we deal with sin, we will never get rid of the ghost of guilt.
  - i) Some are haunted by a misspent youth and missed opportunities.
  - ii) Some are haunted by neglected duty.
  - iii) We all need someone who can undo some things that we have done.
    - (1) That person is Jesus.
- g) In Zechariah 3, we have a courtroom scene, which will be the focus of today’s message.
  - i) There is the accused.
  - ii) There is the adversary, who is the prosecuting attorney.
  - iii) There is the advocate, who is the lawyer.

2) THE ACCUSED (ZECHARIAH 3:3)

- a) Joshua stands for the people.

- i) 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:
    - (a) What did it mean then?
    - (b) How does it apply today?
    - (c) How does it apply to me personally?
  - ii) He was the high priest.
    - (1) The high priest stood for the people.
  - iii) In a very real sense, he is representing us.
- b) Joshua, as the accused, had to plead guilty.
  - i) Zechariah 3:3
    - (1) The word "Satan" means "adversary," and he had a good case against Joshua.
    - (2) He is dressed in filthiness.
      - (a) This is a picture of anyone who is not dressed in the righteousness of the Lord Jesus.
  - ii) Joshua had no defense.
    - (1) He was obviously guilty.
      - (a) This is what the Bible says concerning all of us.
        - (i) Romans 3:19
    - (2) The very first thing that we must do with our sin is to admit our guilt.
      - (a) As the accused, we must always plead guilty as charged.
- c) What is guilt?
  - i) 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.
      - (a) The burn and the feeling are two different things.
    - (2) Many people are dealing with guilt feelings.
      - (a) Just as the burn is the raw flesh and blisters, the guilt is that which causes the feeling.
        - (i) But the guilt is not the feeling.
    - (3) Our conscience may make us feel guilty when we are not guilty.
      - (a) Our conscience is like a thermostat.
        - (i) It will function wherever it is set.
    - (4) Sometimes we may be guilty and not feel that we are.
  - ii) Guilt is a reality.
    - (1) It is the result of the filthiness of our sin.
  - iii) Guilt can cause all kinds of emotional and physical baggage.
    - (1) Guilt brings anxiety and depression.
    - (2) It can make us physically ill.
      - (a) Psalm 32:3
        - (i) David was actually groaning in his sickness.
  - iv) Guilt will bring spiritual sterility.
    - (1) The person who is haunted by the ghost of guilt is not driven to God.
      - (a) A person with unresolved guilt is driven further away from God.

- v) 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.
      - (a) They cannot take away one particle of guilt.
        - (i) Only God can do that.
        - (b) They may help someone deal with the pain, but they cannot deal with the burn.
  - vi) 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.
  - vii) 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.
      - (a) They think that somehow it will resolve itself, but it never will.
  - viii) 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.
  - ix) Many turn to alcohol to try to drown their problems, but it doesn’t work.
  - x) 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.
      - (a) It is a way of saying that the problem is too big for God.
  - xi) We have to learn how to deal with guilt.
  - d) It is obvious, according to Zechariah 3:3, that Joshua was wrong.
  - e) There is one thing that God will not accept for sin, and that is an alibi or an excuse.
    - i) Jesus did not die for alibis or excuses.
  - f) As the accused, we must plead guilty.
    - i) Not until we plead guilty can we deal with this ghost of guilt.
- 3) THE ADVERSARY (ZECHARIAH 3:1)
- a) Zechariah 3:1
    - i) The word “Satan” means “adversary.”
  - b) We have an adversary.
    - i) He is very real.
    - ii) His name is Satan.
    - iii) He comes against us like he has no one else to come against.

- iv) 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.
- c) Satan is pictured in the Bible as a prosecuting attorney.
  - i) Revelation 12:10
  - ii) He is accusing us.
    - (1) He has plenty to accuse us about at any time.
- d) Satan is the accuser of the brethren.
  - i) 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.
      - (a) He wants to cripple us and then blame us for limping.
      - (b) He wants us to be doubly defeated.
- e) Satan the accuser is also Satan the enticer.
  - i) He will whisper to us to go ahead and commit that sin.
    - (1) He will tell us that we can get away with it.
  - ii) 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.
- f) We need to learn the difference between accusation and conviction.
  - i) The Holy Spirit is the convicter.
    - (1) He will convict us of sin.
  - ii) The devil is the adversary.
    - (1) He will accuse us of sin.
  - iii) Accusation comes from Satan.
    - (1) It causes us to feel hopeless and helpless.
      - (a) Judas, who betrayed the Lord, was filled with so much remorse that he committed suicide.
        - (i) The remorse did not draw him back to Jesus.
          - 1. It drove him from Jesus.
        - (ii) In trying to escape the Hell within him, he dropped into the Hell before him.
          - 1. Matthew 27:3-5
          - 2. Acts 1:16-18
- iv) 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.
    - (a) Simon Peter was convicted of his sin when he denied the Lord.
      - (i) He wept bitterly, and God restored him.
        - 1. Matthew 26:75
        - 2. John 21:15-17
  - (3) 2 Corinthians 7:10

- (a) There is an ungodly sorrow that brings remorse.
  - (b) When we have Godly sorrow, we repent.
    - (i) God saves us and delivers us.
  - (c) Many people have the ghost of guilt, and the sorrow of the world works in them death.
    - (i) It may be spiritual death.
  - g) Satan wants us to focus our attention on our sin, ourselves, and on him.
    - i) He wants us to focus on anything but Jesus.
    - ii) He wants us to live under the dark cloud of guilt and despair.
      - (1) Some churches even major on guilt.
        - (a) We may preach about sin, but we shouldn't major on guilt.
    - iii) Guilt that does not bring true conviction and repentance but brings remorse and beats people down becomes a tool of the devil.
  - h) 2 Corinthians 2:10-11
    - i) 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.
- 4) THE ADVOCATE (ZECHARIAH 3:1-5)
- a) Zechariah 3:1-2
    - i) Joshua may have sinned, but he had been redeemed.
    - ii) The Lord stood as his advocate.
  - b) 1 John 2:1
    - i) 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.
        - (a) He is Jesus Christ the Righteous.
  - c) Jesus never defends His children's sins, but He does defend His children.
    - i) He never makes it easy on sin.
      - (1) Even when He forgives, He may chasten.
    - ii) If we are saved, then we will never stand before God to be judicially judged for our sins.
    - iii) It is Jesus, who is our defense attorney, who stands against the accuser.
  - d) Jesus defends us on the basis of His redeeming grace.
    - i) When Jesus died on the cross, He said that it was finished.
      - (1) John 19:30
    - ii) We should thank God for the unfinished work of Jesus.
      - (1) Hebrews 7:25
        - (a) He is able to save us all the way through.
          - (i) He will never lose us.
          - (b) He saves us to the uttermost because saving grace is securing grace.
          - (c) He ever lives to make intercession for us.
    - iii) We have a defense attorney, an advocate.

- e) People think that they can deal with guilt through education, psychology, and therapy.
  - i) But nothing can wash away our sins except the blood of Jesus.
  - ii) The blood of Jesus totally and completely forgives and cleanses.
- f) Romans 8:33-34
  - i) 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.
      - (a) Only God can do that.
- g) Hebrews 7:25
- h) Zechariah 3:2-5
  - i) Not only does the Lord rebuke the accuser, but He also restores the accused.
  - ii) A turban was placed on his head.
    - (1) "Holy to the Lord" was written on the turban.
      - (a) Exodus 28:36
  - iii) 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

5) WHAT SHOULD WE DO WHEN WE ARE HAUNTED BY THE GHOST OF GUILT?

- (1 JOHN 1:9)
- a) Consider the source.
    - i) Is this guilt real, or is it manufactured?
    - ii) Is it Holy Spirit conviction?
    - iii) Is it Satanic accusation or just psychological wrong thinking?
  - b) If there is sin, confess it.
    - i) 1 John 1:9
      - (1) This verse says, "If we confess our sins."
        - (a) It does not say, "If we confess our sin," singular.
    - ii) Name our sins.
      - (1) Call sin by its first name.
      - (2) The Holy Spirit will convict us specifically.
        - (a) He will not convict us of sin that has already been forgiven.
    - iii) We will never have peace until we confess our sins.
    - iv) The word "confess" literally means "to say the same thing."
      - (1) It means to say about our sin what God says about it.
        - (a) We are to agree with God.
    - v) Psalm 139:23
    - vi) Psalm 19:12
      - (1) Sometimes it is painful when God shows us our secret faults.
    - vii) 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.
- c) Claim the solution.
  - i) 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."

6) CONCLUSION

- a) Have you ever thought about what it means to be clean?
  - i) To know that there is nothing between your soul and the Savior?
- b) Joshua had been saved, but he had that old filthy garment.
- c) The accused represents us.
- d) The accuser is Satan, the adversary.
- e) The advocate is the Lord Jesus Christ.
  - i) 1 John 2:1
    - (1) He has never lost a case.
- f) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
- g) 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.
  - i) Romans 3:23
  - ii) Romans 10:9-10
  - iii) Romans 10:13
  - iv) Acts 16:31
  - v) John 3:16