

# The Restless Unsettling of a Guilty Conscience

Luke: All Things New



## Series Goal

That Mercy Hill Church would be made new as we follow the One who is making all things new!



## Sermon Text

Luke 9:7-9



## Big Idea

There is no hope of denying your guilt, of pushing back against it, of numbing the conscience, of washing the stains. These are but an exercise in futility and they spiral down into insanity—a self-destructive, suicidal madness. But there is hope at the cross of Christ, in the agony of God, in the guilt offering of a spotless Lamb. Confess and believe!

### (1) Herod's Maddening Guilt

When news of Jesus' ministry reaches even Herod in the palace here, Herod along with the rest of the people is trying to figure out who this Jesus is. It would seem from the way Luke records it that Herod is simply considering the various options being tossed around. But the other accounts put a much sharper point on all of this. Herod is not merely deliberating, he arrives at a certainty. Mark puts it this way: "But when Herod heard of it, he said, 'John, whom I beheaded, has been raised'" (6:16). On this, one commentator writes: "Herod clung somberly to the view suggested by his own uneasy conscience, and the very starkness of the words 'whom I beheaded' emphasizes his self-torture" (TNTC).

### (2) Our Insufficient Dealings

- (1) **Denial**—We learn to retell the story to ourselves and others in a way that removes our guilt or justifies our actions.
- (2) **Pushback**—It's not enough for me just to deny my guilt, I need to attack those who are pointing it out in me, blame others for my actions, redirect attention elsewhere so I can feel better about myself once more.
- (3) **Anesthetics**—Anesthetics are what you use to numb the pain. They don't get rid of the problem, but they do get your mind off of it for a while.
- (4) **The Wash Cycle**—You try to self-clean, self-wash, self-atone. You see your guilt. You're not trying to deny it, push back against it, or numb it. But you think you can fix it.

### (3) The Only Way Out

Come out of hiding. Acknowledge your guilt before God. Confess your sin. Let the heart break. Let the tears flow. Let the Spirit have His way with you. And do it all in the light of the cross, do it all with faith that God is ready and able to forgive you totally, decisively, eternally in Christ. Confession and faith. This is the great escape. This is the only way out from the dungeon of our guilt. Here is the God-ordained means of redemption and revival. Jesus paid it all!

## Reflection Questions



- Have you experienced the restless unsettling of a guilty conscience? How are you tempted to deal with it insufficiently? How have you seen this trend towards madness and insanity?
- Do you think even your unbelieving friends, neighbors, coworkers have a sense of guilt before a holy God? How have you seen them try to deal with it insufficiently? How can you help lead them towards the cross and the atonement of Christ?
- Why do you think it's so hard to admit you're wrong and need help? How has this shown up in your life lately? How does the cross free you to get low in love?