

# LAMPLIGHTER

MAY 2009

**THEME: “Under God’s Watchful Eye-Living with Guilt”**

**LUKE 12:6-9**

*Now instead, you ought to forgive and comfort him,  
so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. (2 Cor 2:7 NIV)*

Dear Fellow Forgiven Followers of Jesus,

For many people today the spiritual journey is filled with crushing burdens. I think of the character Rodrigo from the 1986 academy award winning movie “The Mission.” Rodrigo, played by Robert DeNiro, portrays a slave trader who kills his brother in a fit of rage. He’s filled with such terrible remorse and guilt that, to pay penance and get rid of his guilt he carries his armor through the jungle as a symbol of the crushing burden of his guilt. Are you burdened like Rodrigo in your spiritual journey today? Do you carry around any regrets? If so, I’ve got good news that you can lighten your load. It’s likely that many of us are carrying burdens today that don’t belong on the journey, burdens like the armor that Rodrigo was carrying on his journey.

Guilt, undoubtedly, has a role in our lives. It helps to keep our rebellious behavior in check. When we transgress God’s Law given in the Ten Commandments, our consciences are troubled. Paul writes in Romans 2:14-15, “Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, {15} since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.”

However, our guilt consumes us at times. It affects our relationship with ourselves – what we think about ourselves, with others – how we view or feel about them, and with God. At such times, guilt becomes unhealthy. Jesus calls us to be people who Live in present-tense. An average person’s anxiety is focused on: 40% -- things that will never happen; **30% -- things about the past that can’t be changed** [dare we say guilt and regret over past failures – my words]; 12% -- things about criticism by others, mostly untrue; 10% -- about health, which gets worse with stress; 8% -- about real problems that will be faced. Jesus said in John 8:36, “So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.” Or Paul says in Romans 8:1, “Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ.” And Peter chimes in with his inspired words of 3:21, “and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also-- not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ,” In the atoning sacrifice of Jesus and the forgiveness we have through Him, God gives us a good conscience, a clear conscience, a clean conscience in which our guilt has been removed.

In light of the forgiveness that God imparts to each of us, we also ought to forgive one another. (Matt 7:12 NIV) “So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.” (Eph 4:32 NIV) “Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.” On February 9, 1960, Adolph Coors III, millionaire head of Coors Company, was kidnapped and held for ransom. Seven months later his body was found on a remote hillside. He had been shot to death. His son, Adolph Coors IV, was then fifteen years old. He lost not only his father, but also his best friend. For years he hated Joseph Corbett, the man who was

sentenced to life for the slaying of his father. In 1975, almost 15 years later, Adolph Coors IV was brought to faith in Christ. Yet, his hatred for Corbett, the murderer of his Dad, still consumed him. He knew he needed to forgive Corbett as Jesus Christ forgave him. So he visited the maximum-security unit of Colorado's Canon City penitentiary to talk with Joseph Corbett. Corbett refused to see him. So Coors left Corbett a Bible with the following inscription: "I'm here to see you today, and I'm sorry that we could not meet. As a Christian I am summoned by our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, to forgive. I do forgive you, and I ask you to forgive me for the hatred I've held in my heart for you." Later he confessed, "I have a love for that man that only Jesus Christ could have put in my heart."

Look at the list: bitterness, rage, anger, brawling, slander, malice, unforgiveness. Traveling light, Paul says, is letting God begin to deal with the hurts, the slights, the anger and unforgiveness that burdens us down. Do yourself a favor and let go of your guilt. If we want to travel light, we have to unpack the donkey of all the baggage we loaded up. Some of us are carrying things that are so heavy, it is no wonder our spiritual lives have suffered. Instead discover the peace of being under God's watchful eye!

**Close with prayer, the Lord's Prayer, Benediction, and Song – #84 "Let Us Ever Walk With Jesus"**