

WORDshop Week #5: Forgiven

Hopefully, you have been bold enough to pray Psalms 139:23-24 and have spent some time with God, receiving his glorious, life changing, chain breaking correction. If you have, satan* is not happy about it and probably came at you with all kinds of accusations, guilt and shame. It is a tired, old tactic that he has used from the beginning. Any time the Holy Spirit convicts us of sin, for the purpose of delivering us from it, satan jumps at the chance to condemn and accuse. He does not want us to fully understand the implications of grace and forgiveness. He certainly does not want us to walk in them in every area of our lives!

(* Using a lower case “s” when referring to satan is not a typo. I just like to do that as an intentional way to diminish and mock him. He does not deserve a capital letter!)

Revelation 12:9-10, *“This great dragon—the ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, the one deceiving the whole world—was thrown down to the earth with all his angels. Then I heard a loud voice shouting across the heavens, “It has come at last—salvation and power and the Kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the **accuser** of our brothers and sisters has been thrown down to earth—the one who accuses them before our God day and night.”*

God has many names, based on who He is and what He does, and so does satan. He is a very real enemy. Here, John calls him the “accuser”. It’s who he is and what he does, but by grace, through Jesus, we are not guilty. We are the righteousness of God, in Christ Jesus! (2 Cor. 5:21) The enemy can accuse us all day long, but if we know the truth, we remain free. Often though, we take on satan’s role and begin to accuse ourselves. We literally do satan’s job for him, becoming our own judge, jury and jailer. We help the enemy to steal, kill and destroy in our lives.

John 8:42-47, *“42Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me. 43Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. 44You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it. 45But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me. 46Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me? 47He who is of God hears God’s words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God.”*

In Exodus 20:7, we read the fifth of the ten commandments, *“Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.”*

Most people read this as only meaning not to use God’s name when cursing. It is quite common for people to use the name of “Jesus” in a profane way, by making his name into an expletive. However, on a more profound level, there is a far more egregious way we take his name in vain. I know this seems like a left turn in our conversation, but bear with me for a moment as we dig a little deeper here.

Vain – adj., producing no result; useless, having no meaning or likelihood of fulfillment
synonyms: futile, useless, pointless, to no purpose, hopeless, ineffective, ineffectual, inefficacious, impotent, unavailing, to no avail, fruitless, profitless, unrewarding, unproductive, unsuccessful, failed, abortive, for nothing; thwarted, frustrated

When we become Christians, we literally take the name of Jesus Christ, but have we taken His name in vain? Do any of the synonyms above reflect your Christian life? Those are not the results Jesus died to give us. **John 10:10** says, “*The thief’s [satan’s] purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.*”

Let’s look at the antonyms of vain: functional, usable, fruitful, effective, effectual, potent, productive, successful, valuable, precious, priceless, cherished, esteemed, prized, treasured, worthy.

Those antonyms of vain are all things that we are to be through, and in, Christ. If we have received Jesus and “taken His name”, we can not let the enemy neutralize us through his lies and strongholds, or we are very much taking Jesus’ name in vain. What He did for us, on the cross, is in vain if we do not receive Him and walk in what He provided. He already paid the price for every sin. He already bore every sickness in His own body. He made peace for us. Stop trying to pay the price yourself. Walk in the grace, peace, love, health, righteousness, holiness and freedom that He bought for you!:

2 Peter 1:2-9, “*May God give you more and more grace and peace as you grow in your knowledge of God and Jesus our Lord. By his divine power, **God has given us everything we need for living a godly life.** We have received all of this by coming to know him, the one who called us to himself by means of his marvelous glory and excellence. And because of his glory and excellence, **he has given us great and precious promises.** These are the promises that enable you to share his divine nature and **escape the world’s corruption caused by human desires.** [insert your unchecked desires here] In view of all this, **make every effort to respond to God’s promises.** Supplement your faith with a generous provision of moral excellence, and moral excellence with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with patient endurance, and patient endurance with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love for everyone. The more you grow like this, the more productive and useful you will be in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But those who fail to develop in this way are shortsighted or blind, **forgetting that they have been cleansed from their old sins.**”*

Psalms 32:1-5, “*Oh, what joy for those whose disobedience is forgiven, whose sin is put out of sight! Yes, what joy for those whose record the Lord has cleared of guilt, whose lives are lived in complete honesty! When I refused to confess my sin, my body wasted away, and I groaned all day long. Day and night your hand of discipline was heavy on me. My strength evaporated like water in the summer heat. Finally, I confessed all my sins to you and stopped trying to hide my guilt. I said to myself, “I will confess my rebellion to the Lord.” **And you forgave me! All my guilt is gone.**”*

Psalms 103:8-13, “*The Lord is compassionate and merciful, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love. **He will not constantly accuse us,** nor remain angry forever. He does not punish us for all our sins; he does not deal harshly with us, as we deserve. For his unfailing love toward those who fear him is as great as the height of the heavens above the earth. **He has removed our sins as far from us as the east is from the west.** The Lord is like a father to his children, tender and compassionate to those who fear him.”*

Hebrews 12:1-2, “*Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, **let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up.** And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. **We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus,** the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God’s throne.”*

In the natural, when we lose weight, we get new clothes, and in the Spirit, it is the same.

Isaiah 61:3, “To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, **the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness**; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, **that he might be glorified.**” (KJV)

Isaiah 61:10, “I am overwhelmed with joy in the Lord my God! **For he has dressed me with the clothing of salvation and draped me in a robe of righteousness.** I am like a bridegroom dressed for his wedding or a bride with her jewels.”

Psalms 30:11-12. “You have turned my mourning into joyful dancing. You have taken away my clothes of mourning and **clothed me with joy**, that I might sing praises to you and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give you thanks forever!”

Colossians 3:12-14, “Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, **you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.** Make allowance for each other’s faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. **Above all, clothe yourselves with love**, which binds us all together in perfect harmony.”

Holding on to guilt, grief, shame, pain, unforgiveness, unworthiness, failure, condemnation, regret, and any other thing that the enemy uses to keep us in bondage, makes us so spiritually heavy that the clothing God has for us does not fit right. Until we are ready to let go of all of the spiritual weight, the garment of praise does not fit right. The robe of righteousness does not fit right. We can’t be clothed in mercy, kindness, patience and love if we can’t offer those things to ourselves. We aren’t even able to experience the fullness of salvation when we try to carry the weight of all of these other things! We must cast off the spiritual weight so our new clothes fit! Let go of the spirit of heaviness and wear the garment of praise! God wants us to shed every weight.

Do you get the monumental, life changing, implication of this? I am praying, as I write this, that the Holy Spirit will give you understanding, and God’s perfect love will cast out all fear. Unlike physical weight, the spiritual can be dropped in an instant – in the moment that we fully comprehend God’s love, forgiveness and grace - when we keep our eyes on Jesus! I pray that for everyone reading this. When we receive forgiveness, we can begin to walk in righteousness, because of who He is, rather than trying to earn it through what we have done. The spirit of heaviness is gone and in its place, praise. When that weight of condemnation is gone, we can begin to walk in what Jesus died to give to us.

ENGAGE AND APPLY

Three areas of unforgiveness

1. We haven’t received God’s forgiveness
2. We have not forgiven others
3. We have not forgiven ourselves

Have you taken God’s name in vain?

Are you walking in the forgiveness that Jesus died to give you?

Does your life bear fruit?

What have you not given to God?

What do you need to let go?

Are you holding on to any guilt, shame, regret, grief or unforgiveness?

Are you holding on to any sin?

How are those things keeping you in bondage?

Is the enemy accusing and condemning you? Are you?

Have you fully embraced the magnitude of God's grace and forgiveness?

How do you release anything to which you are still clinging?

Are you ready to lose the spiritual weight and be clothed as God intended?

Spend some time in prayer, praise, and the Word, to allow God to work in all of these things.