

# Calling the Bride

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## The Sin that so Easily Besets Us

“And you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free” – John 8:32

*Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that so easily besets us, and let us run with patience the race set before us, looking to Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith – Hebrews 12:1,2*

My husband and I were participating in an art show at a mall in California. I got into a conversation with one of the shop keepers there who was also a Christian. She visited our booth often during the days we were exhibiting and we shared many conversations. During one of them she confessed to me that at one time she had committed adultery.

“I don’t understand how it could have happened,” she told me. “I was in the Scriptures all the time.”

Well, nobody ever said that it was difficult to sin. The writer of Hebrews tells us that sin besets us quite easily. Jesus’ own identification with human frailty attests that – *“the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak – Matthew 26:41.* And it is His identification with human weakness that makes Him an able High Priest –

*For we have not a High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need – Hebrews 4:15, 16.*

God wants us to know that when all our good intentions have proven fruitless, there is always forgiveness and cleansing for a sincerely repentant heart.

*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness – I John 1:9.* The Apostle John also makes a distinction between the righteous who can fail through an onslaught of human weakness and those who willfully, deliberately, continuously practice sin. - *Whosoever abides in Him sins not* - The original Greek here denotes a continuous willful action. These, he says, have never known God in the first place. – *“whosoever sins (Continuously, deliberately) has not seen Him or known Him - I John 3:6.*

John says that whoever is born of God does not continuously sin for – *“His seed (word and Spirit) remains in Him” - I John 3:9.*

When Jeremiah prophesied of the coming new covenant God says that He would put His laws, His Word into the hearts of the people. - *This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord, I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and iniquities I will remember no more” – Jeremiah 31:33, 34, Hebrews 10:16.*

*Hearken to Me, you that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is My law... Isaiah 51:7.*

We receive this inner seed of God’s word through the Holy Spirit which is imparted to believers through the atonement, the shed blood of Messiah Jesus. This new covenant removes an outer “religious” obedience to a *relational obedience.* We serve God now, not because we have to, but because we love Him, we’re grateful for our unmerited salvation through the cross of our Savior and we want to obey Him.

The word in the heart is the check that reigns in those who love God and realigns them into obedience. Like the woman I met in the mall, hers was a one time offence that she would never repeat because of the pain it caused her because she had sinned against her Lord. No true Christian wants to continue sinning. We have been called to glorify our Father in heaven.

When we sin, God is not glorified, we mock God by our disobedience and the Scriptures tell us that He does not tolerate being mocked. – *Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap - Galatians 6:7.*

We will reap what we sow and that chastisement or correction, whatever form it takes, is an indication of His love for His children – *for whom the Lord loves He chastises and scourges every son whom He receives – Hebrews 12:6.*

It is not the will of God that any of His children succumb to the lusts of the flesh.

As I ponder the testimony of my acquaintance at the mall, and her bewilderment at her ability to fail so easily, even though she was in the Scriptures, reminds me of Hebrews 12:4 – *You have not resisted unto blood striving against sin.*

I believe the writer of Hebrews is referring to the blood that Jesus shed in Gethsemane. He sweated blood in His agony to die to His flesh and procure our salvation. He fought through to do what He didn’t want to do. We are being called to exhibit the same effort to resist doing what we want to do.

We are reminded in the Scriptures that we are in a spiritual war and that the devil is walking about seeking whom he can devour - *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour- I Peter 5:8* *Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.- verse 9.*

My beloved family in Christ, we have to make ourselves determined not to become food for the enemy of our souls.

When Pharaoh was pursuing the Israelites to destroy them, he was the epitome of determination and “positive confession.” The Israelite’s song of victory at his defeat declares that - *The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them. – Exodus 15:9.*

We know that it was the devil who was working through Pharaoh to destroy God’s people. He is a determined dude. We need to be just as determined to resist him. Our declaration should be –

I will not be pursued – I will stand and fight with all the spiritual weaponry my God gives me in Christ.

I will not be overtaken, for nothing can get through the armor of my faith and the blood of Jesus that I appropriate for my defense.

I will not be divided, but I will remain unified with my Lord and strengthened by His presence within me.

I will not permit the devil to satisfy his lust upon me; therefore I will not give into the spirit of lust that he promotes.

I will draw out my sword upon the enemy of my soul and slay his influence upon me with the powerful word of my God.

I will resist the enemy and His intentions and desires for my failure.

I will destroy every ungodly thought and desire in the name of Jesus who gave His life for me. Amen!

It is a choice. We can choose to fight or succumb. Let’s choose to fight and glorify our Father in heaven.

We are not alone in this battle. His Holy Spirit is within you

because - *You are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world - I John 4:4.*

*Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. - James 4:7.*

And know that there is no temptation common to man, but God has given a means of escape, or a way to endure it until we emerge victorious - *There is no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not permit you to be tempted above that you are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it - I Corinthians 10:13.*

Pray that you do not enter into temptation and that you will be delivered from it.

*Pray without ceasing - I Thessalonians 5:17-* Don't be divided from God and do not let anything hinder your connection with Him. Prayer is our continuous communion with the Lord. Maintaining a close personal relationship with Him is a wall of defense that the devil cannot penetrate. Was my friend at the mall negligent in her prayer life and communion with God even though she was in the word? We need both - the word and relationship to help keep us walking in the ways of God. When we become complacent in this area we make ourselves vulnerable to attack.

Practice the discipline of keeping your mind focused on the things of God - *Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things - Philippians 4:8.*

Avoid beholding ungodly images on the television, internet and magazines. God honors those who choose to separate themselves from the things of the world. Desire the perfect peace that arises when your mind is focused on the Lord. - *You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You: because he trusts in You - Isaiah 26:3.*

There are two motives for obedience - love and a fear of God. Jesus said, *If you love Me, keep My commandments - John 14:15.*

Joseph's love for God kept him from committing adultery with Potiphar's wife.. - *"How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" - Genesis 39:9.*

Although he suffered as the result of his obedience he was restored gloriously.

We are called to suffer with Christ, for there is torment and suffering when we battle the flesh's control over our lives, yet the victory we experience in knowing we have overcome and won the battle is worth every drop of sweat from our tormented brows.

David, on the other hand, even though he was a righteous man, while he was in a season of spiritual complacency that temporarily overrode his love and fear of the Lord, fell into sin and he committed adultery with Bathsheba. His rebellion against God's commandment resulted in an unplanned pregnancy. According to Jewish law, Bathsheba would have been put to death and David engineered her husband's death to cover the whole scandal.

Here we have to stop and remember that even when we try to hide our sins, God sees everything. He knows every thought that comes into our minds, every motive and intent of the heart. In other words it's vain to hide from God. Confess and repent and let Him cleanse you on a daily basis.

David's sin resulted in a severe judgment from God, resulting in the loss of children and his kingdom for a time. He

experienced great humiliation before all of Israel, just as God had pronounced. What David tried to hide, went public and God made sure - *your sin will find you out. - Numbers 32:23*

Having a healthy fear of God is a valuable check on our behavior before Him.

Part of David's judgment resulted from the retaliation of Absalom upon his brother for raping their sister, Tamar. In this instance it's important to note that the lust that came upon Amnon left as soon as he completed his act of rape- II Samuel 13:15. Here we can see that although we can be tempted from our own lust - James 1:14, the devil can cause spirits of lust to overcome someone. If Amnon had been genuinely in love with Tamar, his passion would not have left so suddenly, indicating that it was a demonic spirit, and we need to be aware of this warfare. Jesus gave us all power over the enemy, Matthew 10:1, and we can rebuke and cast out spirits of lust that are specifically sent by the devil and witchcraft in Jesus' powerful and mighty name. Some spirits that have manifested themselves in continuous behavior patterns in family lines have to be wrestled and come out eventually by prayer and fasting.

So, my brethren let us not neglect the weapons of our warfare and put on the whole armor of Christ- Ephesians 6:11. *Let us serve God acceptably with reverence and with godly fear, for our God is a consuming fire - Hebrews 12:28, 29.*

Let us remember that *we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ - II Corinthians 5:10.*

*So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God - Romans 14:12.*

In Justin Martyr's Law of the Gospel of Hebrews (or Nazarenes) there is a statement attributed to Jesus that is not found in the Gospels. Jesus says, *"In whatsoever state I shall find you, in that I will judge you; as the end of all things proclaims to us."*

This concept is supported by the Scriptures as Jesus admonishes those to be careful not to have Him find you indulging the flesh when he comes. *"Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting (overeating), and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day comes upon you unawares" - Luke 21:34.*

We do not want to be ashamed before Him at His coming - I John 2:28.

We want to hear Him say, - *"Well done, you good and faithful servant: you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things: enter into the joy of your Lord - Matthew 25:21*

So let us love God with all our hearts, and choose the things that please Him and it pleases Him when we obey His word and give Him the reverent fear He deserves. For this One who loves us so wants only our best - and that's worth sweating a little blood in our own gardens of Gethsemane. You are not alone in this struggle. Jesus' Spirit is in you to help you finish this test in victory, because you can do all things through Christ who strengthens you, and me. - from Philippians 4:13.

*Abide in Me, and I in you...*

*John 15:4*

*... For without Me you can do nothing. John 15:5*