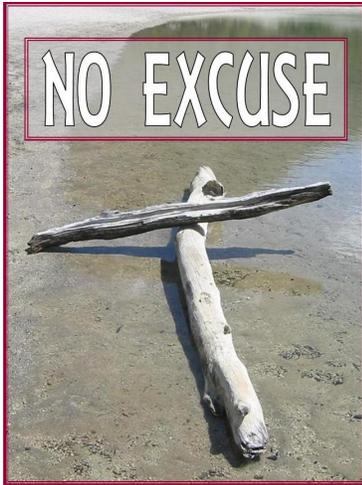


NO EXCUSE



Remember the saying, "The devil made me do it"? I'm showing my age, I suppose, but I remember Flip Wilson doing a skit where his character, "Geraldine" coined that phrase on TV years ago. The saying caught on like wildfire. People had shirts, coffee mugs, and a million other assorted products that we jokingly laughed about. It was one of those phrases that seemed to lighten the load of guilt from any sin we might commit. It wasn't our fault after all, the devil made us do it.

Well, times change. Or do they? Today, we may not sin and say "the devil made me do it", but as believers, I've noticed a tendency to live with that same idea still lurking behind any wrong we commit, the idea that we are truly victims because of our old sin nature. Victims because of this fallen world. Victims. Did you catch that? We somewhere came up with this idea, like Mr. Wilson, that we have no control over our choice to sin, we are helpless and must succumb to it, as if we're sucked into a vortex out of our control.

God's word however tells a very different story. The Bible tells of a Savior that came to die for those very sins. No matter how small, no matter how big, every one of our sins nailed Jesus Christ to that cross. After His resurrection, just before He ascended, He told his followers that He was not leaving them alone, that He was going to ask His Father to send a Helper for them. And so He did. And God the Father obliged. And the Holy Spirit came to dwell inside every believer, taking away any excuse we might latch on to for the sins we choose to allow in our lives.

Big things happened in that process.

- The debt for our sin was paid - it was no small debt, and it cost more than we could ever pay. Have we lost sight of just what it cost? I Corinthians 6:20 says, ***"For you have been bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body."*** At the end of the story, comes Revelation 5:9, in which a new song is sung about Jesus before God's throne, and it says, ***"Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for you were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation."*** We have surely been bought with a redemption price, and it cost Jesus His very blood.
- God made a way, and what was once something that had power over us (the sin nature) was changed forever. In Christ we have been born again with a new nature. Romans 6:6-7 says, ***"knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin."*** He has set us FREE from the power of sin. If that's not something to be joyful about, I don't know what is.
- He gave every believer a new nature in Christ, and placed His Spirit within us to empower us to live godly. I love the book of 2 Peter. Look at Ch. 1:4, ***"For by these"*** (referring to His own glory and excellence mentioned in v. 3) ***"He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the***

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corruption that is in the world by lust." Partakers of the divine nature. Camp on that thought awhile!

- He made us VICTORS, rather than victims. If you look at those two words there are just three letters that change everything. We turn from victims to victors because of Our Risen Savior.

There is NO EXCUSE to live as victims after we have accepted salvation. Christ has bought us, and made us victors. We, dear ones, are OVERCOMERS. 1 John 5:5 ***"Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?"*** Let's not make excuses for our sin, but rather, confess it, and live in the victory He has blessed us with.

Father God, how incredible and wonderful that You should make a way, that You would free us from the sin which we were once enslaved, making us victors! Help us to not even consider living in our old self, but live to walk in newness of the life You've given us. Allowing Your Spirit to guide us. Provide for us. You did it all Lord, leaving us with no excuse. Thank You, and to You be the glory and praise forever.