

PathLights

*"Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path"
Psalm 119:104*

June 5, 2016

Excusing Sin

by Frank Himmel

Achan had been a poor man all his life. He was born either in Egypt as a slave or else in the wilderness amidst a people with nothing. During Israel's conquest of Jericho, he came upon a bar of gold, a cache of silver, and a beautiful imported mantle. Did Achan's poverty justify ignoring God's command to take no spoils from Jericho? It did not. Achan was punished severely for his sin (Joshua 7). *Our lot in life does not excuse sin.*

Peter was impetuous. He often spoke or acted without thinking things through. Peter's impetuosity led him to boast (Matthew 26:33-35), to argue with the Lord (Matthew 16:22), even to take violent action (John 18:10). Did the fact that Peter especially struggled in this area excuse his conduct? Of course not. *Our personal weaknesses do not excuse sin.*

Saul of Tarsus was a godly man. He fervently did what he thought would please God. Believing Jesus to be an imposter, Saul persecuted Christians. He said, "I acted ignorantly in unbelief" (1 Timothy 3:13). Did that excuse what he did? Not at all. *Ignorance does not excuse sin.*

Adam was not the first to sin, although Paul depicted him as the one through whom sin was introduced into the world (Romans 5:12ff). Adam sinned at the

suggestion of his wife, Eve (Genesis 3:6). When God confronted Adam, he tried to blame his wrong on her (v. 12). God still held him accountable. *Others' involvement does not excuse sin.*

Uzzah was part of King David's effort to honor God by restoring the ark of the covenant to prominence in Jerusalem. Uzzah and Ahio drove the ox cart on which the ark was being transported. At one point the cart nearly overturned, and Uzzah touched the ark to steady it. Surely he meant no disrespect, yet God struck him dead (1 Chronicles 13:10). The Law was explicit about this matter (Numbers 4:15). The truth is, their whole approach to transporting the ark was wrong (1 Chronicles 15:13). This incident illustrates that even *good intentions do not excuse sin.*

Nothing excuses sin. Sin is always a choice, a wrong choice (James 1:13-16). Let's resolve to do our best to make right choices. And for the times we have not, let's humbly seek God's forgiveness instead of trying to justify ourselves. ■



Keep Heart

by Frank Himmel

“Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we received mercy, we do not lost heart” (2 Corinthians 4:1).

Paul surely encountered much that might have discouraged him. While he saw hundreds or thousands converted, he saw more than that who rejected the gospel. In city after city he was ridiculed, threatened, beaten, imprisoned, or worse. Almost as soon as he established the church in a given place, false teachers would follow and attempt to undo his work. In some cases he received reports of brethren still practicing old sins or involved in new problems.

Paul’s critics were tireless. They misrepresented his teaching and found fault with everything from his looks to his pay... even when he preached for free!

More than once a coworker deserted him. Some fought among themselves. And he knew that some who “took up the slack” when he was in prison were self-serving in their preaching.

Paul was not superman. At times he was overwhelmed by the task at hand. On occasion he was confused by the Lord’s plans for him, why he could not preach in fields that seemed so promising.

“We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but not



forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body” (2 Corinthians 4:8-10).

How did he keep going? The answer is in the verse we began with: “we have this ministry, as we received mercy.” Paul realized the implications of divine mercy. He had been [spiritually] dead. Christ died for him. Now he was alive. Therefore he owed everything, even himself, to Christ. “And He died for all, that they who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf” (2 Corinthians 5:15). Preaching was Christ’s will for him, with both its joys and trials. So be it. Remembering the mercy shown him motivated him to extend divine mercy to others, both for their benefit and to the Lord’s glory.

Brother, sister, don’t lose heart in your efforts for the Lord. Remember what He has done and will do for you. Live for Him. ■

Service Leaders for the Week			
	Sunday Morning	Sunday Evening	Wednesday Evening
GREETER	Greg Winget	Josh Baucom	Chad Brock
SONG LEADER	Carlos Garcia	William Lefort	Ian Brown
OPENING PRAYER	Chris Brooks	Brian Wilson	
LORD’S SUPPER			
BREAD	Howard Moore	Howard Moore	
CUP	Albert Lee Harrison	Albert Lee Harrison	
CONTRIBUTION PRAYER	Chad Brock		
SERMON/INVITATION	Frank Himmel	Frank Himmel	Bruce Williams
CLOSING PRAYER	Justin Candella	Kerry Gray	Josh Baucom