

Rescue

Weekly Devotion #2

Below is a short devotion based on the Week 2 Devotion questions in your Renew: Session 3 handout. You'll get the most out of this devotion if you answer the questions yourself first. The goal is not for you to have the exact same response, but to understand the correct meaning of the Biblical text and then apply it personally in a way that uniquely helps you grow in your knowledge, love, and worship of God.

Colossians 2:13-15 And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, (14) by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. (15) He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

During our last Renew class, we highlighted three images that the Bible uses to help us understand what Jesus accomplished for us on the cross: redemption, propitiation, and reconciliation. These verses in Colossians give us one more picture: victory. Through his death on the cross, Jesus triumphed in victory over the Satanic rulers and authorities. In his most humiliating moment, what He really did was humiliate *them*. How did he do this? By disarming them - by taking away the weapons they use to bring us harm. The Apostle Paul tells us what this means in the previous verse: Jesus disarmed the Satanic powers by paying the price our sins deserved and cancelling our record of debt. This image reminds us of redemption. Because of our sins, we are all in debt to the God who made us to glorify Him. And the punishment for that debt is enslavement to death. When Jesus died in our place, He was paying the price to cover that debt and buy us out of slavery. Now, what does that have to do with disarming the Satanic powers? The Hebrew name "Satan" literally refers to an adversary and is sometimes used in a legal sense: an adversary who opposes and accuses you in court. This is why, in the book of Job, Satan is pictured as entering into God's divine council and accusing Job of not really loving God. And, even more explicitly, Revelation 12:10 calls Satan "the accuser of our brothers." But now that our sins are completely paid for, Satan and his demons no longer have any legitimate grounds to accuse us. The record of our debt has been snatched out of their hands and nailed to the cross of Jesus. It won't hold up in court because it's been paid in full. In this way, our Adversary and Accuser has been disarmed, defeated, and put to an open shame.

None of us are perfect. Even the best of us still sin. The Apostle Paul even called himself "the chief of sinners." But, through faith in Christ and what He accomplished on the cross, all of those sins are paid in full. They can never be used against us in God's court of law. Jesus has won our case and God's verdict can never be overruled. Far from making us want to continue in sin, this glorious truth should make us love God and seek to please Him even more!

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, this Scripture makes me think of the words from the hymn *It is Well With My Soul*: "My sin - oh, the bliss of this glorious thought - my sin, not in part but the whole, is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more, praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!" What a glorious thought indeed! Thank you for sending your Son to cancel our record of debt through His death in our place - not because of anything we've done, but out of your own sheer mercy, grace, and love. Forgive us for the sins we continue to commit, but also forgive us for the times we fail to believe that those sins are canceled and forgiven. By your Spirit and your Word, free us from the accusations of our enemy that cause us to wallow in defeat and self-pity and give us faith and strength to rise up after we fall. And help us to show the same grace to others when they fall. Whatever our lot, please teach us to say, "It is well, it is well with my soul." Thank you again for loving us. In the name of your victorious Son, Jesus Christ, Amen.