

It's War - Sins Against Us

I was reading this week and came across this story about an olympian named Shun Fujimoto. He competed in the team gymnastics competition for Japan in the olympics. Fujimoto suffered a broken right knee in the floor exercise. But his injury did not stop him from competing in his strongest event, the rings.

If you don't know what the rings are, it is where you jump up and grab a hold of two rings that are about 8.5 feet off the ground. They swing around and hold themselves in different positions...it's impressive, takes tremendous upper body strength. Fujimoto's routine was excellent, but what was most impressive was his dismount (landing), with a triple somersault twist, landing perfectly with that broken right knee. Afterwards he was asked about it, he said, "Yes, the pain shot through me like a knife. It brought tears to my eyes. But now I have a gold medal and the pain is gone."

This is a picture of what every victorious Christian goes through. Paul tells us that we are not running a race without purpose or without a goal. There is a very real prize at the end of the race....spending forever with Jesus.

Just like Fujimoto, we must deal with temporary pain in order to obtain the prize. Only our prize is eternal!

Our real adversary, satan, has a life long goal of causing mankind pain, wounding God's creation, God's prized possession.

We have progressed from talking about angels, to demons, to personal sin, to generational sin, and today we wrap up the series "It's War" with Sins Against Us. Sins committed against us are often a person's greatest obstacle to having freedom. Sins against us often cause us to open the door to demonic activity in our lives.

Way back in the beginning, after satan deceived Adam and Eve and they sinned. God curses satan and then says this to him:

Genesis 3:15 (AMP)

15 "And I will put enmity (open hostility)
Between you and the woman,
And between your seed (offspring) and her Seed;
He shall [fatally] bruise your head,
And you shall [only] bruise His heel."

We see two types of seed here:

1. your seed (satan's offspring - demons, unbelievers)
2. her Seed (Eve's offspring - Jesus who is her descendent, and all who are in Him)

Everybody fits into one category or the other. There's no other option and I want you to know there's no "hybrid" seed. You can't be part of both!

Ephesians 5:8 (HCSB)

8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light—

1 Corinthians 6:11 (HCSB)

11 And some of you used to be like this. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Ephesians 2:13 (HCSB)

13 But now in Christ Jesus, you who were far away have been brought near by the blood of the Messiah.

It's clear, you are either God's or satan's. I know it doesn't seem fair to some people, but here is the beauty of it....IF you are satan's, Jesus loves you and died for you so that you can become His. He pursues you no matter what!

But we have to keep in mind that satan also pursues us. Once we come to Jesus, the enemy still brings trouble our way. There is enmity, hatred, hostility, between satan and God's children.

But God tells us that satan can only bruise the heel of Jesus by causing Him to suffer but Jesus will crush satan's head with a fatal blow!

Romans 16:20 (HCSB)

20 The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

Are you ready to see satan crushed under your feet? If so, say to God "Yes Lord!"

Genesis 3:15 is a reminder that we are at war....a spiritual war and unfortunately it's not only our sins that cause us problems. You would think that would be enough to have to overcome. How many of you have your hands full just dealing with YOU?

We also have to deal with the sins against us. This would be a good time to clarify what I mean by sins against us.....this does not mean just anything someone does that you don't like!

I think people get this idea that they get to decide what is sin when it's done against them, like "since it's against me, I get to make the rules"

NO.....God still makes the rules, He set the standard. Sin is anything that is done violates the law of God.....what is that law? I'm glad you asked:

1 John 3:4 (HCSB)

4 Everyone who commits sin also breaks the law; sin is the breaking of law.

NOT your law.....God's law!

Matthew 22:36-40 (HCSB)

36 "Teacher, which command in the law is the greatest?"

37 He said to him, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. 38 This is the greatest and most important command.39 The second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. 40 All the Law and the Prophets depend on these two commands."

Anything that violates this is sin. When we do things that do not display love for God and love for people. When someone sins against you, it's not that they aren't submitting to your will.....they aren't submitting to God's. There is a BIG DIFFERENCE!

The reality is that people really do hurt us in life. Sometimes it's intentional, sometimes it's unintentional. But it happens.....Unfair, right?

We don't wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, powers, rulers of darkness, spiritual hosts of wickedness....satan is ruthless. He will use people, even those closest to you, to wound you spiritually.....

We can be sinned against in many, many different ways.

Rejection - One of the most subtle is rejection. Everyone deals with rejection at some point in life. It can start small....Last picked for every sports team, no one wants to be your lab partner, all the girls you like just want you to "get away", your friends are always too busy for you, parents paid no attention to you, overlooked for a job or a promotion, children are growing up and are now too cool for you.

These are all forms of rejection, and what can happen is this rejection happens over and over and it begins to grow roots and begins to grow getting entangled into your identity. At which point it can become a spiritual wound.

Now when someone here at church doesn't say "Hi" to you one Sunday, you get offended. "They must be mad at me, they must not like me" when in all reality, they were on their way to do something, had something on their mind, or just didn't see you.

Now because of the rejection against you.....you begin to reject others. Maybe to let them know how it feels, maybe just to beat them to the point, if you don't interact with people you are less likely to be rejected.....the enemy is camped out in your wound....

It's a spiritual wound of rejection.....Jesus can bring freedom to your life today! You don't have to live life in fear of rejection. You have a Savior who has been where you are!

Mark 12:10 (HCSB)

10 Haven't you read this Scripture: The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.

John 1:11 (HCSB)

11 He came to His own, and His own people did not receive Him.

Sometimes people think Jesus doesn't understand.....He understands.....give it over to Him!

Abuse - Abuse is rampant in this world. Physical abuse, verbal abuse, sexual abuse.....whether a one time incident or a pattern, abuse can create deep wounding that may affect a person for the rest of their life.

All abuse is the enemy trying to demoralize the victim, destroying their self worth, confidence, cause confusion. Especially when done to a child who doesn't yet know right from wrong, who is being abused by someone they trust.....it becomes not only an open wound but is often a learned behavior that is reproduced.....

I've talked about verbal abuse before when we looked at identity. If a person is in a verbally abusive relationship they hear things like "you are not good enough, you'll never amount to anything, you are stupid, you are ugly, if only you were more like so and so" The abuser, not being able to initially see the results of the abuse, continues to pound away with the insults

In these situations, the abusive takes root, the enemy sets up camp in these wounds causing the person to really believe these lies are true of themselves. They may become discouraged, feel worthless, lack motivation and ambition. I'm here to tell you today that these are lies of the enemy! This is the truth: Jesus loves you, Jesus died for you, you have great worth and value, Jesus can free you from the enemy's influence by healing these wounds!

And again, Jesus knows what it's like to be the one being abused.

Matthew 27:27-31 (HCSB)

27 Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus into headquarters and gathered the whole company around Him. 28 They stripped Him and dressed Him in a scarlet military robe.29 They twisted together a crown of thorns, put it on His head, and placed a reed in

His right hand. And they knelt down before Him and mocked Him: “Hail, King of the Jews!”³⁰ Then they spit on Him, took the reed, and kept hitting Him on the head. ³¹ When they had mocked Him, they stripped Him of the robe, put His clothes on Him, and led Him away to crucify Him.

Matthew 27:39-44 (HCSB)

³⁹ Those who passed by were yelling insults at Him, shaking their heads ⁴⁰ and saying, “The One who would demolish the sanctuary and rebuild it in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross!” ⁴¹ In the same way the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, mocked Him and said, ⁴² “He saved others, but He cannot save Himself! He is the King of Israel! Let Him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in Him. ⁴³ He has put His trust in God; let God rescue Him now—if He wants Him! For He said, ‘I am God’s Son.’”⁴⁴ In the same way even the criminals who were crucified with Him kept taunting Him.

Jesus has been where you are.....and He has overcome!

Abandonment - Abandonment is when a person has that feeling that life itself has cast them aside or left them on a doorstep.

This can certainly be caused by a mother or father leaving at any age, even if you don’t remember them, even if you have had someone else fill that gap, the feeling of abandonment may still be there.

But abandonment can be caused by the end of any relationship whether it’s divorce, being deserted by a friend, even a loved one dying.

When abandonment takes root and the enemy sets up camp, the results can be insecurities, addictions, compulsions, distress.....the draining of self esteem.....

These are wounds that CAN be healed by the power of Christ!

Jesus knows what it’s like to be abandoned.....once He was arrested and on His way to be crucified.....most of His followers ran off!

Even worse:

Mark 15:34 (HCSB)

³⁴ And at three Jesus cried out with a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lemá sabachtháni?” which is translated, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”

Jesus experienced an abandonment that believers will never experience.....abandonment of the Father God.....When Jesus took all of our sins upon Himself, He received the judgement of a holy God who does not dwell with sin. The Father turned away in that moment abandoning Jesus.....

John 14:16 (HCSB)

16 And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Counselor to be with you forever.

Hebrews 13:5b (HCSB)

Be satisfied with what you have, for He Himself has said, I will never leave you or forsake you.

Jesus knows abandonment.....to a degree none of us ever will. But He was abandoned so that we wouldn't have to be.....that is why it grace is amazing!

You may have other wounds caused by the sins of others, some that you may think that Jesus doesn't understand. Maybe you don't understand what Jesus went through, He has seen it all, faced it all, and defeated it all!

Today, would you search yourself for wounds that have yet to be healed, wounds caused by others, and ask for healing?

Just like the generational sins, the sins against us are out of our control, but also know that the sins against us are not the open door to satan and his demons.....the sins against us are just the demons knocking on the door.

Who opens the door? YOU!

It's your reaction, what you choose to do with these sins against you, that can open the door to the enemy or slam it in his face! Sins against you are an open door when they turn into personal sin. This often starts with unforgiveness and leads to bitterness.....2 of satan's favorite words....

Unforgiveness robs us of the full life that God intends for us.

Hebrews 12:14-15 (HCSB)

14 Pursue peace with everyone, and holiness—without it no one will see the Lord. 15 Make sure that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no root of bitterness springs up, causing trouble and by it, defiling many.

When we refuse to forgive, it leads to bitterness. When something is bitter it has a harsh taste. That is a good way to measure if you have bitterness, does a person or topic immediately put a harsh taste in your mouth? If so, you are bitter....

Let no root of bitterness spring up.....it causes trouble and defiles many! A bitter root brings forth bitter fruit. If you are bitter you will produce bitterness. You will be resentful or cynical, you will cause pain, you will be hard to bear.

I know that it can be difficult to forgive, it's understandable that it's harder to forgive someone who physically abused you than it is to forgive someone who forgot to meet you for lunch. No one said forgiveness is easy...if it were easy, everyone would do it!

It takes the supernatural power of God. It takes the power of the Holy Spirit moving in you so that your soul (mind, will, emotions) can choose the Spirit (forgiveness) instead of the flesh (unforgiveness)

This is how you forgive when you don't even want to....the Spirit of God. It comes down to a choice, submit to God or don't. Live bound by unforgiveness and bitterness, or live FREE by the power of the Holy Spirit!

Forgiveness does not mean we act as if no wrong has been done; it does mean we recognize that grace abundant has been given to us and that we have no right to hold someone else's wrongdoing over his head.

Don't worry about the person who sinned against you.....that's not your job to make sure there is justice.....

Romans 12:19 (HCSB)

19 Friends, do not avenge yourselves; instead, leave room for His wrath. For it is written: Vengeance belongs to Me; I will repay, says the Lord.

You see that? You are not to avenge but instead....that means give it over.....instead leave room for God. So if you avenge yourself, you are not leaving room for God. At this point you have your "revenge" and it's not near as effective as what God would have done!

It's similar to receiving rewards for things you do. When you do them without announcing them, God will reward you, but if you go and announce your good deeds to everyone, that recognition will be all you get....

I want God's reward and I want God to repay those who sin against me! Let God do His job....you do yours!

Let's quickly get to the main issue..... the real cause for your hurts when it comes to sins against you.....it's not only unforgiveness, but the fact that you may not even WANT to forgive.

I'm telling you today that if you don't, the wound will never heal, the roots will always be there.

A bomb dropped in WWII exploded and SHRAPNEL flew. A soldier went to the medical station with a tiny black puncture mark in his shoulder. The medical staff was busy attending every one. One orderly cleaned the wound and asked the doctor if he should put a dressing on it.

The doctor said, "No," and asked for a probe. He put the little silver stick in the wound and moved it around. Nothing happened for a few moments. Suddenly, the probe touched the little piece of shrapnel inside, and the patient let out a yelp. The doctor knew he had found the problem.

The doctor requested forceps. He put the forceps in and removed the piece of shrapnel. Only then did he want to apply the dressing.

You may be putting a little dressing of religion over a wound that cannot heal because there is something inside that is causing it to fester. But, if you will open your heart to the Holy Spirit, He will reveal the source of the problem. If the Holy Spirit's probe touches a piece of shrapnel don't resist! Ask Him to use His forceps to remove the problem. Then God can apply something that will really heal it.....and it may be uncomfortable. But it'll be worth it!

Luke 4:18-19 (HCSB)

18 The Spirit of the Lord is on Me, because He has anointed Me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim freedom to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free the oppressed, 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

Today if you are captive by unforgiveness and bitterness, Jesus can set you free! If you have been holding on to something for some time, hoping it would just go away or heal itself, then today is your day.....

Time does not heal all wounds.....but Jesus can....and He will if you will let Him!