

1. LifeLines on 6/5 will be Exodus 20:8.
2. We'll meet during June, break July - August, & resume September 11, after Labor Day.

LifeLines May 22, 2023

Today's Scripture: 1 Verse

Ephesians 4:27

And do not make room for the devil.

WHY WE'RE HERE

2 Timothy 3:16-17, All scripture is inspired by God & is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, & for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work.

CONTEXT

Paul is addressing the people of Ephesus who accepted Jesus as their Savior. He's teaching them aspects of the new life they should live. In this short letter, Paul wants to help the early Christians grasp the idea of reconciling all things in Christ, keeping their mind on Him, seeking His guidance & bringing unity to their new community, the same way Christ desires to bring unity to His church. (Hmmm...sound familiar?)

Among the rules were reminders to refrain from lying & stealing; to speak truth lovingly, to put away bitterness & be kind. These behaviors would enhance their new household of faith. He said if they became angry they should look to Christ & not let anger lead to sin. He explained letting anger linger & fester would surely make room for the devil to begin his destructive work in them & their community. Anger is surely one inroad to the devil. It plays right into his hands.

Isaiah 14:12-21 & Ezekiel 28:12-17 (*extra credit!*) are among verses that provide colorful reading & tell a little of Satan's history. He hasn't yet been destroyed. Satan seeks revenge against God's plans, God's goodness & God's love for His Creation. He was against Jesus, & he's against us!

One of the things Christians still reckon with today is keeping their minds stayed *not on* disaster, discouragement or negativity, but on Christ & the Father's will. We are wise if we leave no room for the devil or the ones he leads. Their goal is to intrude on the lives of the children of God & destroy the abundant life Christ died to give us.

DIFFERENT VERSIONS (Versions not listed are similar to the NRSV.)

AMP

And do not give the devil an opportunity (to lead you into sin by holding a grudge, or nurturing anger, or harboring resentment, or cultivating bitterness).

CEB (Contemporary English Bible)

Don't provide an opportunity for the devil.

CEV (Contemporary English Version)

And don't give the devil a chance.

CJB

Otherwise you leave room for the adversary.

ESV

And give no opportunity to the devil.

GW

Don't give the devil an opportunity to work.

MSG

Go ahead & be angry. You do well to be angry – but don't use your anger as fuel for revenge. And don't stay angry. Don't go to be angry. Don't give the devil that kind of foothold in your life.

NCB (New Catholic Bible)

And do not give the devil an opening.

NCV

Do not give the devil a way to defeat you.

NLT (New Living Translation)

For anger gives a foothold to the devil.

NLV

Do not let the devil start working in your life.

TLB

For when you are angry, you give a mighty foothold to the devil.

SELAH

BREAKING DOWN THE VERSE

And do not make room... The Greek work, *topon*, can be translated as *opportunity*, or it can refer to a place or room. *Any* open space for the devil to enter is too much space! He's looking for any area in our lives that would compromise our integrity or cause others to question our witness for Christ. We are warned to be watchful at all times.

for the devil... The devil has many aliases: accuser of the brethren, slanderer, adversary, tempter, seducer, father of lies. He fell from, or was pushed out of, heaven for being prideful & wanting to be worshiped as God is worshiped.

SELAH

RELATED VERSES (Add other related verses as you think of them.)

Matthew 4:10, Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, & serve only Him.'"

Matthew 6:13, And do not bring us to the time of trial, but rescue us from the evil one.

Matthew 16:19, “I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, & whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, & whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

Luke 10:18, He said to them, “I watched Satan fall from heaven like a flash of lightning.”

Luke 22:31-32, “Simon! Simon, listen! Satan has demanded (obtained permission) to sift all of you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your own faith may not fail; & you, when once you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.”

John 8:44-45, “You are from your father the devil, & you choose to do your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning & does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar & the father of lies.”

John 10:10, The thief comes only to steal & kill & destroy. I came that they may have life, & have it abundantly.”

John 12:31, Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out.

Acts 19:15, But the evil spirit said to them in reply, “Jesus I know, & Paul I know; but who are you?”

Romans 12:19, Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.”

1 Corinthians 10:13, No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, & He will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing He will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it.

2 Corinthians 2:11, And we do this (forgive others) so that we may not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs.

2 Corinthians 4:4, In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the believers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

Ephesians 2:1-2, You were dead through the trespasses & sins in which you once lived, following the course of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work among those who are disobedient.

Ephesians 4:22-24, You were taught to put away your former life, your old self, corrupt & deluded by its lusts, & to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, & to clothe yourselves with the new self, created according to the likeness of God in true righteousness & holiness.

Ephesians 4:30, And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with which you were marked with a seal for the day of redemption.

Ephesians 6:12, For our struggle is not against enemies of blood & flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

Ephesians 6:16, With all of these, take the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one.

Philippians 4:8-9, Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence & if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned & received & heard & seen in me, & the God of peace will be with you.

1 Timothy 4:1-2, Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will renounce the faith by paying attention to deceitful spirits & teachings of demons, through the hypocrisy of liars whose consciences are seared with a hot iron.

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

1 Peter 5:8, Discipline yourselves, keep alert. Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour.

1 John 3:8, Everyone who commits sin is a child of the devil; for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The Son of God was revealed for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil.

Revelation 20:1-2, Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit & a great chain. He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent who is the Devil & Satan, & bound him for a thousand years, & threw him into the pit, & locked & sealed it over him, so that he would deceive the nations no more, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be let out for a little while.

Revelation 20:10, And the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire & sulfur, where the beast & the false prophet were, & they will be tormented day & night forever & ever.

Revelation 20:14-15, Then Death & Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire; & anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.

SUMMARY

We are blessed with privileges & promises that are ours in Christ Jesus. With these privileges come responsibilities. Jesus told us to be alert & forewarned about Satan in Matthew 6:13 when He instructed us to pray for protection from the evil one. He knew we would encounter the devil in our everyday lives. This means we are to abide in Jesus, walk in spirit & in truth, take every thought captive to obey Christ & leave *no room for the devil*. We clothe ourselves in God's truth, listen & obey so our thoughts, words & actions don't get out of hand & lead us down the wrong path.

Our original nature is a sinful nature, & the devil capitalizes on that. He eagerly awaits the tiniest slip in our Christian character. That's all he needs to slither in & disrupt a friendship, a marriage, a business partnership, anything that would steal our joy. While sin is his primary inroad, he'll take any road he can find. About 10 years ago, I came up with this reminder: SIN means - Satan Is Navigating. Never hand the reins over to him.

Satan accuses believers of many things. He loves to plant doubt & suspicion. He's *very* convincing when it comes to making believers doubt their standing with God & blinding them to the truth of the gospel. He delights in heaping guilt feelings on us. He loves any sign of bitterness, envy, discouragement, or pride. He entices people to sin & makes evil seem appealing, making it seem like a good way to get even with those who have harmed us. Believers must work diligently to keep the devil from having any opportunity or advantage to interfere in their lives & win the upper hand.

CONCLUSION

The work of the devil is to counter God's work. He works against God who is *Life & Truth*. In other words, Satan is *death & lies*. He wants to ruin lives, causing as many as possible to suffer *his fate* & end up in the lake of fire.

If we walk closely with & develop an intimate relationship with our God & Savior & get to know the Holy Spirit within us, we will learn to walk according to our calling as children of God & joint heirs with Christ. Conscientiously applying the Word of God in our lives & developing our spiritual gifts will help us demonstrate humility of heart. Clothing ourselves with the new nature of Christ will help us walk in the spirit & in truth.

The armor of God (Ephesians 6) includes truth, the righteousness of Christ, peace, faith, the promise of salvation, the Presence of the Holy Spirit, & God's Word. Armed with these tools, we protect ourselves from spiritual wickedness & the forces of darkness, & the devil has *no opportunity* to deceive our soul or cause us to stumble in our Christian walk.

Satan has no power over the *eternal destiny* of believers in Christ. Jesus bore the wrath of God against *all* our sin, including any results of the devil's manipulation in our lives. God doesn't hold our sins against us, because we have been found *not guilty*. His own Son took our punishment. *The Holy Spirit has sealed us with His protection for the day of redemption.*

Satan remains as the prince of the air & the enemy of mankind until he is chained or bound during the millennial reign of Christ.

*“Away with you, Satan! For it is written,
‘Worship the Lord your God, & serve only Him.’”*

Let this verse be a *LifeLine* for you!

SCRIPTURE IS OUR –

LifeLine!