

Monday, August 29, 2016 - Making Excuses before God

James 1:13-15 - Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God;" for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.

In psychology and logic, rationalization (or making excuses) is a defense mechanism in which perceived controversial behaviors or feelings are explained in a rational or logical manner to avoid the true explanation. Everyone is guilty of making excuses at one time or another. It's starts very early in life. Kids are great sources of laying blame somewhere else or for using excuses. Whether it comes in the form of "he/she did it," "it wasn't me," "he/she made me do it," and "everyone is doing it," the list of excuses start early and seem to continually grow. When was the last time you asked your child to do something such as clean their room? Suddenly everything becomes more important in their mind than that and they have a ready made excuse for you.

The same thing occurs in our spiritual life. From the beginning of time man has been placing blame on someone else for their sin before God. It is interesting how our word "excuse" has developed in the English language. It originally meant, "to give a defense or reason for something." However, it has come to mean, "An unjustified or false reason for something, a false reason given to cover up the real reason." The Bible is full of those who would throw excuses upon the Mercy Seat of God. How did he respond? Consider the following excuses that God didn't accept:

Adam and Eve –

Gen. 2:16-17 - "And Jehovah God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."
But they did eat!

Gen. 3:1-6 - Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which Jehovah God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of any tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, Of the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat: but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as God, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and she gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat

Gen. 3:11-12 - And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.
Adam blames God and then he blames Eve

God's response is found in verse 17 - And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in toil shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return. Temptation didn't justify disobedience for either Adam or Eve. Placing the blame on someone else, especially God, does not provide you a safety net from personal responsibility. When ANYONE knows the will of God, and violates it, he is without excuse.

King Saul -

When Saul was sent to destroy the Amalekites he was told to slay all of them and all of their animals, ox and sheep, camel and ass. In I Samuel 15:9 we're told –

"But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them: but everything that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly."

When God came to Samuel the prophet he told him - It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king; for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments. When Samuel confronts Saul:

"Saul said unto Samuel, Yea, I have obeyed the voice of Jehovah, and have gone the way which Jehovah sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the devoted things, to sacrifice unto Jehovah thy God in Gilgal. And Samuel said, Hath Jehovah as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of Jehovah? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." When Saul is finally confronted with the truth, he admits he has sinned. He had rejected God's word.

King David and others moved the Ark of the Covenant in a way which God had not authorized (he moved it on a cart – not on the shoulders of the Levites, as God had authorized, 1 Chron. 15:1-15; 13:1-14; 2 Sam. 6:1-11). Because the affair involved an unauthorized way of moving the ark, and because an unauthorized man touched it, he was destroyed by God. While there were no excuses given in this story, we should see that even the most sincere motives, a man touching the ark to keep it from falling, do not justify disobedience to God

The parable involving the one talent man -

Matthew 25:24-25 - "Then he who had received the one talent came and said, 'Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours. But his lord answered and said to him, 'You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not

scattered seed. So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest."

The one talent man was called wicked and lazy for the excuse he gave

The parable of the Great Supper -

Luke 14:16-27 - "Then He said to him, "A certain man gave a great supper and invited many, "and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, 'Come, for all things are now ready.' "But they all with one accord began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.' "And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused.' "Still another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' "So that servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind.' "And the servant said, 'Master, it is done as you commanded, and still there is room.' "Then the master said to the servant, 'Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. 'For I say to you that none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper.'"

Those who offered excuses for declining the invitation to the great supper were then deprived of the privilege of attending.

Faithfulness will find a way. Indifference will find an excuse. We use excuses in our spiritual life. Those who don't obey Christ by being born again will use excuses such as: "I'm too busy," "I don't feel like it," "I'm not sure I need to," "I don't believe God will condemn me forever," or "there is plenty of time." Those who are Christians also have excuses for not being faithful to Christ: "I have too many things to do," "It isn't easy to live the Christian life, and I can't do it," "I don't get much out of the services or Bible class," or "I don't see a need in being there on Sunday night or Wednesday night."

All excuses, regarding our Spiritual life, show a lack of faithfulness to Jesus and to God. There is no excuse for not being reconciled to God since He has informed us in the Scriptures how we are to conduct ourselves and live for Him.

Let us submit to Christ as our only head. Let us hold to the one faith and practice the one baptism so we can be in the one body of Christ. Let us abide in the doctrine of Christ and have leadership that complies with the word of God. Let us bear the fruit of the Spirit and worship acceptably with reverence and godly fear.