

Lent, Day 37

Wednesday, April 17, 2019

Revelation 20:1–6

I remember the first time that Sarah caught me smoking after we had been married. I had gotten sloppy in my covering up, so she smelled the cigarette smoke on me when I came home from work. When she confronted me about how long it had been going on I lied. I told her it had been one month—it had been significantly more. Of course we quarrelled and then made up. She forgave me, but how much did that forgiveness mean when what she was forgiving was a lie?

I remember the day that I quit smoking. It was years later. Years of a repeated cycle of my smoking, hiding, getting caught, lying, arguing, and making up. After deep wrestling with who I was, what I wanted, and prayer the Lord removed the addiction from me. I was free. But, I also knew clearly that I needed to go home to Sarah and confess everything from the first day, through all the deception, to that day of release. I did. I came clean and she forgave me, how much more did that forgiveness mean to me now that she knew the whole truth?

We have an accuser, the Satan who has a role to play. He accuses. Wright notes that this is an important role because Satan accuses liberally. So when forgiveness comes we are confident that there is no hidden vestige of sin which has gone unnoticed. No, Satan has brought all that we have done, and then some, to light. It is all of our sin—every last shameful detail—that is washed away by the blood of Christ. Satan is our enemy and he does this for his own purposes, but God uses this to make our salvation total. Thanks be to God.

A friend once told me that the Spirit convicts, but Satan condemns. This is helpful for us during lent. We don't need to shy away from either voice. Both can lead us to repentance. Lent is all about us being examined so we can be free of our sin and guilt through Christ.

Prayer

Lord, search our hearts and reveal us to ourselves. Thank you that you do not let one iota of our sin to sit and fester, but you uncover it all so you can cleanse it all. Amen.