

# 3 of Jesus' Top Devil-Defeating Declarations

Barely a month after launching my own ministry, I experienced an all-out onslaught of attack. I often describe it as a nagging voice perched upon my shoulder, which redirected my mind's eye to my every sin and struggle since potty training. Ultimately, these accusations attempted to convince me I wasn't good enough for ministry—that I should walk away to do something else.

Beat to tears, I almost did.

But just as God did when Adam and Eve hid from Him out of shame for their sin, He broke into this moment of torment to show me the way out.

## Beholding the Lamb

A week into this warfare, God spoke to me through the still, small voice of Scripture. Within a resource I used to prepare for an upcoming television program, He brought my attention to the words of John the Baptist: "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).

Out of these words, "behold" stood out like never before. It means to "see or observe (a thing or a person, especially a remarkable or impressive one)." To be sure, "behold" is not a quick glance, but it's a close study.

Within minutes of this newfound understanding, God took me to do just what John urged—to behold the Lamb. Suddenly, my mind's eye was redirected to the cross, where I vividly saw the scene where "He who knew no sin became my sin" (2 Cor. 5:21). The purpose of this article isn't to describe what I saw (join me for my online Bible study where I share more about this). But rather, I want you to freshly hear the devil-

defeating declarations Jesus made at Calvary, and what they mean for you today.

### **3 Declarations from the Cross**

The Bible describes the crowd around the cross as unruly. Mockers shouted hateful slurs and scoffed: “He saved others. Let Him save Himself” (Luke 23:35). “Yeah!” another taunted. “If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself!” (Luke 23:37). Let’s tune these out now and focus in on what Jesus had to say.

#### **‘Father, forgive them.’**

The thieves to His right and left aren’t the only criminals who surrounded Him. The hateful mockers, the cruel soldiers, the greedy Judas, the cowered disciples and the masses who yelled, “Crucify Him”—they all played a part in this day.

But the sins that consumed Jesus aren’t theirs alone. Those sins are also yours and mine. His wounds represent the past, present and future mistakes of the entire world. We’re the thieves who stole His innocence and put our filth upon Him. We’re the criminals who ought to be on that middle tree, but instead, Jesus served our death sentence for us.

Here is yet another moment in history when God could have given up on the human race. But He didn’t relent. Instead, He cried out from His tree of execution: “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34).

My eye glaze with tears when I behold the enormity of what Jesus said. “Father, forgive Kyle, for he didn’t/doesn’t know what he did/is doing/will do.” Replace my name with yours and hear Him cry out for you too.

It’s true; we didn’t know what we were doing, and we don’t know what we’ll do in the future. We rarely see sin’s consequences played out in the moment of temptation. But

Jesus' words here diverted the wrath of God and continue to silence the accusations of Satan against us today. If you ever wanted a definition of grace, this is it: "Father, don't hold their ignorance against them; don't punish them for their guilt," Jesus cried. "I take it all upon Me in order that they may live!"

**'Here is your son; here is your mother.'**

When Jesus took His eyes off the crowd He'd just asked for forgiveness, He looked down to His grief-stricken mother and John, the disciple He loved. Filled with compassion, Jesus said: "'Woman, here is your son.' Then He said to the disciple, 'Here is your mother'" (John 19:26–27).

At the foot of the cross, Jesus created a family. He entrusted His mother to the care of His beloved disciple, John; He entrusted John to the care of His mother. There at the cross, they were bonded together and cared for from that day forward.

Allow these words to speak to you too. If you're rejected by family or friends, God comforts, "I chose you!" If you're orphaned and have never known the love of a family, God says, "Welcome to Mine!" If you're the victim of abuse or an absent father, God assures, "I'm your loving Father." If you don't feel good enough to be part of God's family, He declares, "You're forgiven!" There's a bond made in the intimacy of the cross that adopts you into a family where you'll never be abandoned (Heb. 13:5).

**'Why have You forsaken Me?'**

Shortly after, the sky turned dark, and for the next three hours thick, ferocious thunderheads billowed one on top of the other. The thrashing paused as Jesus added His own roar to the rumblings of the impending storm. He thundered, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46).

This is the most heart-wrenching cry ever heard upon this

earth. It's God crying out to God, but not to complain of the pain. Jesus' deepest anguish wasn't the scourge or the spears but the rejection of His Father.

Jesus' words here indicate a transformation was finished; He was now completely in the form of sin—entirely in our place. Saturated with the guilt of the world, the Father had to hide His eyes to break relationship with His Son, even if for a moment.

The revelation that Jesus took humankind's place upon the cross is ultimately what led Martin Luther into his reformation. Luther used to beat himself as a way to “pay” for his sins. But when he finally realized that Christ taking upon the sins of the world meant it included his sins too, he stopped punishing himself.

We can all relate to Luther in some way. Perhaps you don't flog yourself, but do you try to pay for your sin with days or weeks of guilt, a sulking attitude or a negative opinion of yourself? I used to think I had to pay for it with silence. This is exactly the goal of Satan's accusations. He wants you to beat yourself up—to try to pay a fine that is already paid. But Jesus was forsaken by God so you and I are never forsaken by God. Because of the cross, there's no condemnation or punishment to be had. You're free to enjoy a guilt-free life on God's side.

### **Reflect on These Words of Love**

These aren't the only declarations Jesus made at Calvary. There's another Satan-silencing one I'll explore in a subsequent article.

But for now, behold the fathomless love these words from the cross demonstrate, and reflect upon them often. Jesus—a perfect man—took on the filth, the shame and all its consequences for the very people who murdered Him. Think about it. He was born to suffer and die a brutal death for things He

wasn't guilty of, so that you and I might be forgiven, included in the Father's family and avoid punishment. He did it all so we might have eternal, resurrected life with Him.

(Want to go deeper? Join me for a life-changing look at the cross. Register for my free online Bible study today.)

**Kyle Winkler** () is the creator of the popular *Shut Up, Devil!* mobile app. His recent book, *Silence Satan*, has helped thousands shut down the enemy's attacks, threats, lies and accusations. Kyle holds a Master of Divinity in biblical studies from Regent University. Connect with him on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.