

## Let us not fall into *condemnation* (Pt 5 - *Condemn*)

This is our fifth study of the word *condemn* in the Holy Scriptures. In our previous teaching we consulted the Bible and found four different meanings of the word *condemn*, that included; give judgment against, reprove or judge, testify against and eternally damned. In the same study we covered three points:-

1. When we do something that causes our brother to sin we *condemn* ourselves
2. When we *condemn* the just and justify the wicked we are an abomination to the Lord.
3. The sinless lamb of God was *condemned* to death by His brethren

In this teaching we will cover three additional points:-

1. Our words *condemns* us
2. Our oaths *condemn* us
3. Our pride *condemns* us

Let us add a little more detail to our three points:-

### 1. Our words *condemns* us

Mt 12:37 *For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.*

See also Job 15:6

In our third teaching we pointed out that when we judge our brother we *condemn* ourselves (see Rom 2:1). Our first two points in this teaching will establish that our tongue or our words *condemn* us for more than just judging our brothers.

Matthew chapter 12 begins with the Lord Jesus speaking to the Pharisees (verse 2), He then departed from them and goes into the synagogue (verse 9) and then withdrew from there as the Pharisees held a counsel to destroy him (verse 14). At other times in the chapter He was in the midst of a multitude (verse 15) and then verse 24 and 37 establish that Christ is again speaking to the Pharisees. Verse 34 confirms that the Lord is talking to the Pharisees because he says, *O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things?* He goes on to say what appears to common knowledge to his audience, that is; *A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things; and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.* And the reason I suggested that this saying was familiar was because in verse 36 he says, *But I say unto you. Hence they must have had knowledge of the previous saying. And what does the Lord say, that was different to their previous understanding?*

He says, *That every idle word that men shall speak they shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment.* Why? Verse 37 (which is used for our point) says *For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.*

So, our tongue, that unruly evil (Jam.3: 8) which no man can tame, does not only *condemn* us when we criticise or judge our brother (see Matt.7: 1, Rom.14: 13 and Jam.4: 11), but it also *condemns* us when we use words that are idle (verse 36) and I suggest would also include speaking (a) in guile (see 1Pet.3: 10 & Ps.34: 13); (b) lies (see Jer.9: 3); (c) flattery; (d) deceit; and (e) backbiting (see Ps.15: 3) and perhaps strife (see Pro.16: 28). For now, let us consider words spoken in guile or deceit, because these two have a similar meaning to each other. According to the Oxford dictionary the word guile means "treachery, deceit, cunning devices".

Who is the originator of deceit or guile? The old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan who has deceived the whole world (see Rev.12: 9 & 20: 2), the one who deceived or beguiled Eve in Genesis (see chapter 3: 13).

At this point let us take a short diversion to 2Cor.11: 3, where Paul refers his readers to the time that Eve was beguiled by the serpent (notice how Paul did not suggest that the serpent was a myth and Eve was not really the first woman, but rather he authenticates the Genesis account of creation, by referring to the event where Eve was deceived by the devil). Just as Eve was deceived by the words of the devil, so Paul feared the Corinthians might be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

So anyone that comes and preaches another Jesus whom Paul did not preach (see verse 4), or another gospel that Paul did not preach, they are workers of the devil, the old serpent, because their tongues deceive, their words beguile the hearts of the simple (see Rom.16: 18, 19), and therefore their words *condemn* them. That does not mean they are eternally damned, but the person whose words *condemn* them could know of God's judgment in their life.

What examples of things can you think of today that Christians should be fearful of. that might deceive the hearts of the simple, away from the simplicity of the gospel of Christ? We will consider two examples:-

Roman Catholics - make a simple belief in Christ crucified more complicated with works, the Kingdom gospel and baptism, mass, rosary beads, the confessional and their own personal representative of Christ on earth - the Pope. The devil has used this institution to deceive approximately 1billion people world wide. Those who believe and teach her dogmas (church teachings) as Christian truth will be *condemned* for their words that beguile the simple away from the simplicity of the gospel of Christ crucified.

Mormons - also call themselves a Christian church, they use the name of the Lord Jesus Christ in their title, yet they complicate the simply belief in Christ with different stages of salvation, different places people go to when they die and teachings that include God living on the planet Kolob (see Pearl of Great Price - Abraham 3: 9, 16). Those who believe and teach her dogmas as Christian truth will be *condemned* for their words that beguile the simplicity of the gospel of Christ.

Do your words flatter, do they deceive or beguile, do they speak falsely or negatively about others behind their back?

Let us ask God today to help us with our tongue that is so often led by the flesh and not by the Spirit of God. Let us ask God to help us use our words to edify, His name and glorify His body (the church), for when we become consistent at this, our words are less likely to *condemn* us.

## 2. Our oaths *condemns* us

Jas 5:12 *But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and [your] nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.*

There is one more to be added to our list of words that our tongue can speak that *condemn* us, and that is speaking an oath, or swearing by something. The Oxford dictionary says that the word swear means to: "(1) State something on oath, take oath, promise on oath, take (oath), say emphatically that..." and the same dictionary says that an oath means; "Solemn appeal to God or revered or dreaded person or object in witness that statement is true or promise shall be kept". Hence where the text says "swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath...lest ye fall into condemnation." I have summarized these words and teach that our oaths *condemn* us.

Our verse is similar to that spoken by the Lord Jesus in Matt.5: 33, 34, which specifically refers to that taught of old (see Lev.5: 4, 19: 12 & Deut.23: 23) where we are encouraged to honour our oaths, we are not to forswear (according to the Oxford Dictionary forswear means "abjure, renounce an oath...swear falsely, perjure oneself"). So, whereas the Old Testament law taught us to honour our oaths, the Lord Jesus and the book of James say we are not to swear or make an oath by heaven, by the earth or anything.

Can you think of any example today that people make oaths or swear by heaven or earth or anything else? They do not necessarily have to use the word swear or oath. One that comes to my mind is; "as God is my witness I am telling the truth". In this example the person who is making the statement is likely to be an unbeliever, and in the statement they are using the Lord as a witness to what they are saying, in a way that perhaps adds credibility to their statement of 'fact'. So in one breath they could say, I do not believe in God (as we assume they are an atheist) and in the next breath they are using His Worthy name (see Jam.2: 7) in a statement to add sincerity to their words.

One example that does use the word swear or oath, is the promise made by a person in a court of law who is asked to given evidence as a witness. They place their hand on a copy of the Bible (or a counterfeit of the Holy Scripture) and they say,

"I swear (or the person taking the oath may promise) by Almighty God (or the person may name a god recognised by his or her religion) that the evidence I shall give will be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth." (according to: <http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/courts/going+to+court/oaths+and+affirmations/>).

The same website also states: "If an oath has been properly administered and taken, the fact that the person to whom the oath was administered had no religious beliefs at that time does not affect the validity of the oath."

So, in our Christian land a person in a court of law can make an oath or promise by any god they want to choose and even if they use the name of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, they don't have to believe in Him, they just use His Worthy name to give credibility to their witness. Hence they can be untruthful to themselves in what they believe, but they have to be truthful in what they say, after they make the oath. And if someone who does believe the Book which is placed in their hand, swears by Almighty God, whom he believes in, then that person is violating the Book, and God who wrote the Book. Because the same Book says, "*swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and [your] nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.*"

That same bible points out that when you say something it is to be truthful, (let you nay be nay, and your yea be yea), so there is no need for a Christian to swear on anything, to encourage them to tell the truth, because they are simply told, to tell the truth. But when the Bible says *swear not...lest ye fall into condemnation*. That does not mean they are eternally damned, but the person whose words *condemn* them could know of God's judgment in their life.

Karen was once called for jury duty in court and she was asked to swear on the bible but refused. So they gave her a little card that had written on it something else to say, which included, stating that she would tell the truth. That's an example of the truth of Scripture being worked out in a person's life.

Let us remember that even though the world requires us to swear by God to tell the truth in court, or any where else does not mean that we like sheep, have to go along with the request when it contradicts the Holy Scriptures. And in this point we have discovered that when we swear by anything, or make an oath we *condemn* ourselves.

### 3. Our pride *condemns* us.

1Tim 3:6 *Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.*

See also 1Tim.6: 9

So far we have found four (4) different meanings of the word *condemn*, in the Holy Scriptures, that include; give judgment against, reprove or judge, testify against and eternally damned. I suggest that when we read our verse from 1Timothy in the context of the whole chapter we could add a fifth meaning that includes reproach. This is also indicated by Thesaurus.com which includes reproach as being synonyms with *condemn*.

The context of our chapter is Paul's instruction to Timothy regarding the office of a Bishop and Deacon in the church and I suggest that this particular verse is applicable to all believers and that is our pride *condemns* us. Verse 7 continues; *Moreover, he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.* Hence where the verse says "lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil." it is similar to our verse which says "lest...he fall into the *condemnation* of the devil."

The language of verse 6 & 7 in chapter 3 is similar to that of chapter 6 verse 9, which reads *But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.*

When we consider the other meanings for *condemn* we find other verses in Scripture that support our point. I provide two such examples:

a) Given that *condemn* can mean judge, we see that David made a similar point in Ps.94: 2, such that the proud will be judged, they will be *condemned* (see also Dan.4: 37). There is also a hint of *condemnation* upon the proud in Prov.8: 13 & Is.13: 11.

b) Given that *condemn* can mean destruction (eternally damned) we find that Solomon made a similar point in Prov. 16: 17, where it says that *Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.*

Hence, even though our verse in 1Timothy is within the context of a letter regarding the conduct of Bishops and Deacons, I suggest it is applicable to all Christians, and therefore I make the point that; our pride *condemns* us.

The pride of our flesh, can bring down the strongest man, the most godly pastor, because their pride, their haughtiness, their boasting, by its nature puts them above others which goes against the lowliness and meekness of the Lord Jesus Christ (see Matt.11: 29) and the teachings of Paul (see Eph.4:2). And if the strongest man, or the most godly pastor does not deal with their pride, then, as we have already seen from our verse in 1Timothy and Proverbs 16: 18, destruction will follow. Hence our point, that our pride *condemns* us. That does not mean they are eternally damned, but the person whose words *condemn* them could know of God's judgment in their life.

As I have mentioned in previous studies, one of my most difficult lessons since becoming a Christian, has been my pride and especially since coming to the knowledge of the truth of the Authorized Bible. Why has pride been so difficult?

- a) Because the devil knows my weaknesses and uses them all against me.
- b) When man thinks he has knowledge, his flesh encourages him to believe he is better than everyone else who does not have that knowledge.

So if there is an ounce of pride, a little leaven does leaven the whole lump (see 1Cor.5: 6 & Gal.5: 9), and somewhere along our journey, it will pop its head up and those whom we love will desire to flee from our presence and don't be surprised if you have no opportunities open up for witnessing. All because our pride *condemns* us, our pride destroys us, and with pride there is always a fall, there is always destruction before we desire lowliness.

Let us pray for our brethren that they would have a willingness to confront pride when it raises its head and let us ask God to help us have a meek and lowly heart, knowing that pride *condemns* us. Having said what we have said, let us say it again in this fifth study on the word *condemn* we have covered three points which:-

- 1. Our words *condemns* us.
- 2. Our oaths *condemn* us.
- 3. Our pride *condemns* us.