

Week of February 12-18

This week's devotional-writer is Mark Kiburz. Mark serves on our Board of Elders and is currently pursuing his ministerial credentials with the Assemblies of God.

FALSE ACCUSATIONS

Scripture Reading: Read Mark chapter 3

Many years ago, I was at the New York State Fair sitting at a Birds of Prey exhibition. The birds were within a few feet of the crowds. Many in the crowd had never seen these birds before. Some in the crowd were so interested in the birds that hours passed as they watched. I mentioned to the head falconer that it was awesome seeing the enthusiasm in the people. As I sat there, the head falconer relayed a story about an individual that purposely caused a public outcry during one of the shows. The person claimed the falconer was hurting the bird with the leather tethers and these birds should be free. People's attitudes turned from awe over the birds to horror and then to outrage. Yet, anyone watching the birds knew they were not in pain or being mistreated. Sadly, the person grabbed the crowd's emotions and skillfully used them to create a scene.

False accusations have been used throughout time to create doubt and division. In our chapter reading today, the Pharisees tried to use a similar tactic to discredit Jesus. They claimed Jesus was filled with Beelzebub, the prince of demons. The false accusation made by the Pharisees was an attempt to create fear and division. In Jesus' response, he sought to teach the people not to blaspheme and disrespect the Holy Spirit. It was through the Spirit that Jesus taught, healed the sick and cast out demons. The Spirit's work in Jesus was intended to point people to God's salvation. By rejecting the Spirit's work in Jesus, the Pharisees were rejecting the cure for their sinful condition. Such a sin was, therefore, unforgiveable. Had the Pharisees truly wanted truth, they would have seen that Jesus was the Messiah. Because they didn't, they made false accusations against Jesus.

While not on the same level as the Pharisees, there are times, unfortunately, when we, too, are guilty of making false accusations, not against Jesus, but against one another. Maybe someone said something to us we didn't like that hurt us and so we defensively spread a false accusation against our brother or sister to get even. While we may feel better at first, in the end, it will destroy us and sow division. False accusations have no place in the believer's life.

Action Step & Prayer Focus: Reflect on your actions and determine if you have made false accusations towards people. If so, repent and seek forgiveness if necessary.

Prayer Focus: For the Lord to reveal areas where you have been guilty of making false accusations.

Take-a-way: Believers are to be bound to each other in love, not a group of people making false accusations that intentionally harm one another.