

If there is no condemnation, if God is only for me and not against me, what do I make of my sin? This is a description of what we do when there is "no condemnation" and yet we have sinned. How do we think and act?

MICAH 7:7-9 is a picture of what you say to your enemy when he scoffs at your defeat. Here is what you say. My summary of these words is to call them _____. I call it that because the believer admits that _____ and that God _____. But even in a condition of _____ and _____, he will not surrender his hold on the truth that _____. Listen to these amazing words. Mark them. Memorize them. Use them.

_____. *You make merry over my failure? You think you will draw me into your deception? Think again.*

_____ [So there has been a temporary "fall"]; *Yes, I have fallen. And I hate what I have done. I grieve at the dishonor I have brought on my king. But hear this, O my enemy, I will rise. I will rise.*

_____ [so there is a season of darkness and guilty feelings], *Yes, I am sitting in darkness. I feel miserable. I'm sitting here in my dust and ashes. I feel guilty. I **am** guilty. But that is not all that is true about me and my God, about the cross.*

_____ [so the Lord who is angry with him is nevertheless his light]. *The same God who makes my darkness is a sustaining light to me in this very darkness. He will not forsake me.*

_____ [so the Lord is displeased, and angry with him - but it is not the anger of a condemning judge, but of a light-providing disciplining Father! He spans the child and sends him to his room for a time, but he does not turn off the light of hope] **FATHERS GET MAD AT THEIR SONS.**

_____ [so there is real sin], _____ [so this angry God is FOR HIM and not against him. He will justify him and not condemn him!].

O yes, my enemy, this much truth you say, I have sinned. I am bearing the indignation of the Lord. But that is where your truth stops and my theology begins: He—the very one who is indignant with me—he will plead my cause. You say he is against me and that I have no future with him because of my failure. That's what Job's friends said. That is a lie. And you are a liar. My God, whose Son's life is my righteousness and whose Son's death is my punishment, will execute judgment for me. For me! FOR me! And not against me.

Now that is a picture of how to think and act when you sin against your Father whose whole disposition toward you is almighty mercy and omnipotent love. He will not always handle you gently. But he will always love you. And always be for you and not against you. *This misery that I now feel because of my failure, I will bear as long as my dear God ordains. And this I know for sure—as sure as Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is my punishment and my righteousness—God will bring me out to the light, and I will look upon his righteousness, my Lord and my God.*

That is what I mean by gutsy guilt. I know of no other way to persevere in the Christian life in view of our _____ - no other way to stay married for Christ's sake, to rear children, and be single and chaste, and maintain hope and fruitfulness in ministry, than this gutsy guilt: When I fall I will rise . . . though I have sinned, the very one against whom I have sinned will plead my cause and execute judgment for me - not against me, but FOR me! Oh, love this gospel, Church! Love and live this gospel!

This is Gospel-confirming, freedom-preserving, conscience-cleansing, Christ-exalting truth that the devil wants very much for you not to understand or enjoy. So renounce him and all his ways, and lay hold on your freedom which is freedom indeed. **And fight your sin like a victor, not a victim.**

O my brothers and sisters, when you learn to deal with the guilt of sinful failure with this kind brokenhearted boldness, this kind of theology, this kind of justification by faith, this kind substitutionary atonement, this kind of gutsy guilt, this kind of unshakable position that you have in the crucified, risen, invincible king Jesus Christ—when you learn to deal with the guilt of sin this way, you will fall less often. *Because Christ will become increasingly precious to you.*

And best of all, Satan will not be able to destroy your dream of a life of radical obedience to Christ.