

# Weapons for the In-between Time

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## **2 Cor 10:4-6**

*For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.*

## **Eph. 6:10-18**

*Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints...*

## **1. The Word of God**

### **a.) Faith (shield of faith is part of our armour)**

Faith is a position of the heart. It's a way of seeing. It's what we believe for. It shields our heart. It protects us. It results in obedience. Lack of faith often results in disobedience and delays entrance into the promised land.

## **Rom. 10:17**

*So, then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

## **Heb. 11:1**

*Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*

**Heb. 11:6**

*But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.*

**Heb. 6:11**

*By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised.*

E.g. Joshua and Caleb and the other Israelite spies in Num. 13 and 14.

- The Israelites had crossed the desert and were at Kadesh Barnea, ready to enter the promised land.
- The Israelites sent a delegation of 12 spies into the promised land.
- When they returned after 40 days, they reported how amazing the land was. However, 10 spies saw their enemies through eyes of unbelief. It was only Joshua and Caleb whose report was “we are well able to overcome these enemies with the help of the Lord”. They saw through eyes of faith. Because of unbelief, the Israelites were not able to enter into the promised land but had to journey in the wilderness another 40 years.

**b.) Sword of the Spirit**

It's an offensive weapon.

**Eph. 6:17**

*Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.*

e.g. Jesus being tempted in the desert.

**Lk. 4:1-12**

*<sup>1</sup> Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, <sup>2</sup> being tempted for forty days by the devil. And in those days He ate nothing, and afterward, when they had ended, He was hungry.*

*<sup>3</sup> And the devil said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread." <sup>4</sup> But Jesus answered him, saying, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE BY BREAD ALONE, BUT BY EVERY WORD OF GOD.'" <sup>5</sup> Then the devil, taking Him up on a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. <sup>6</sup> And the devil said to Him, "All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish.*

<sup>7</sup> Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours." <sup>8</sup> And Jesus answered and said to him, "Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written, 'YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND HIM ONLY YOU SHALL SERVE.'" <sup>9</sup> Then he brought Him to Jerusalem, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here. <sup>10</sup> For it is written: 'HE SHALL GIVE HIS ANGELS CHARGE OVER YOU, TO KEEP YOU,' <sup>11</sup> and, 'IN THEIR HANDS THEY SHALL BEAR YOU UP, LEST YOU DASH YOUR FOOT AGAINST A STONE.'" <sup>12</sup> And Jesus answered and said to him, "It has been said, 'YOU SHALL NOT TEMPT THE LORD YOUR GOD.'"

### **1 Jn. 2:16**

*For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world."*

These 3 are what the enemy uses in warfare against us in attempting to seduce us and draw us into allowing him to have a legal foothold in our lives.

### **Jas. 1:12-15**

*Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. (13) Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. (14) But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. (15) Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.*

The temptation or being tempted is not the sin. It's what comes after. That's why the bible says, "Flee temptation".

Another example:

There was a time when I was really struggling with illness. Prayed in tongues. Sang in tongues. Refused to carry sickness that Jesus already carried and overcame. Continually declared Word of God –

### **Is. 53:4-5**

*Surely He has borne our griefs  
And carried our sorrows;  
Yet we esteemed Him stricken,  
Smitten by God and afflicted.  
But He was wounded for our transgressions,*

*He was bruised for our iniquities;  
The chastisement for our peace was upon Him,  
And by His stripes we are healed.*

**1 Pet. 2:24**

*(Jesus) who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed.*

This is warfare. Using the Word of truth, sword of the Spirit and refusing to budge from that place of victory until the victory manifests in the natural.

**c.) Truth is an anchor (belt of truth is part of our armour)**

**Eph. 6:14**

*Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist...*

Truth - Is our belt. It holds up our pants so to speak. Covers our nakedness. It's also about being integrous, allowing truth to dictate my life. Allowing God's word to direct and guide me in everything.

**1 Jn. 1:6-7**

*If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. (7) But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.*

**Heb. 4:12**

*For the word of God is **alive and active**. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.*

Truth. Truth is also the Word of God. Which is a sword. A sword can be used as a weapon to fight with offensively, and it can also be used as something to anchor us as we fight:

Our swords grew after we reached each new level, but I almost left mine behind because I did not seem to need it at the higher levels. I almost casually decided to keep it, thinking that it must have been given to me for a reason. Then, because the ledge I was standing on was so narrow and slippery, I drove the sword into the ground and tied myself to it while I shot at the enemy. The voice of the Lord then came to me, saying: "You have used the wisdom that will enable you to keep

climbing. Many have fallen because they did not use their swords properly to anchor themselves.” No one else seemed to hear this voice, but many saw what I had done and did the same. I wondered why the Lord had not spoken to me to do this sooner. I then knew that He had already spoken this to me somehow. As I pondered this, I began to understand that my whole life had been training for this hour. I knew that I was prepared to the degree that I had listened to the Lord and obeyed His voice throughout my life. I also knew that for some reason the wisdom and understanding I now had could not be increased or taken away while in this battle. I was very thankful for every trial I had experienced in my life, and I was sorry for not appreciating them more at the time. Soon we were hitting the demons with almost perfect accuracy. Rage ascended from the enemy army like fire and brimstone. I knew that the Christians trapped in that army were now feeling the brunt of that rage. Some of the demons became so angry that they were now shooting at each other. Normally this would have been very encouraging, but those who suffered the most were the deceived Christians in the camp of the enemy. I knew that to the world this was appearing to be an incomprehensible meltdown of Christianity itself. Some of those who had not used their swords as anchors were able to strike down many of the vultures, but they were also more easily knocked from the ledges where they were standing. Some of these landed on a lower level, but some fell all the way to the bottom and were picked up and carried off by the vultures. I spent every free moment trying to drive my sword deeper into the ledge or trying to tie myself more securely to it. Every time I did this, Wisdom would stand beside me, so I knew that it was very important.

Joyner, Rick (2017-03-04T22:58:59). The Final Quest Trilogy (Kindle Locations 476-494). MorningStar Publications, Inc. Kindle Edition.

*Mercy and truth preserve the king, and by lovingkindness he upholds his throne.*  
*Prov. 20:28*

#### **d.) God’s Word has creative power**

##### **Heb. 11:3**

*By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.*

In Genesis 1 we see how God created the world with His word. He said multiple times “*Let there be....*” And it was so.

Another example of this is Ezekiel 37:

*The hand of the Lord came upon me and brought me out in the Spirit of the Lord and set me down in the midst of the valley; and it was full of bones. Then He caused me to pass by them all around, and behold, there were very many in the open valley; and indeed, they were very dry. And He said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" So, I answered, "O Lord God, You know." Again, He said to me, "Prophecy to these bones, and say to them, 'O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! Thus says the Lord God to these bones: "Surely I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live. I will put sinews on you and bring flesh upon you, cover you with skin and put breath in you; and you shall live. Then you shall know that I am the Lord.'"*

**Ez. 37:1-10**

*So, I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and suddenly a rattling; and the bones came together, bone to bone. Indeed, as I looked, the sinews and the flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them over; but there was no breath in them. Also, He said to me, "Prophecy to the breath, prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, 'Thus says the Lord God: "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live.'"* So, I prophesied as He commanded me, and breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great army.

Words are capsules for spiritual dynamics. What are you releasing with your words?

**Pro. 18:21**

*Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit.*

The Lord once spoke this to me. It was a difficult season personally. You can have what you say but you are saying what you have

**Pro. 13:2**

*A man shall eat well by the fruit of his mouth, But the soul of the unfaithful feeds on violence.*

- Do you realise the potential power that you have in the release of words from your mouth?
- We are made in the image of God. God created the world with His released word. God's word in our mouths has the potential to be as powerful as His word in His mouth.

### **Mt. 12:35-37**

<sup>35</sup> *A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things.* <sup>36</sup> *But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak; they will give account of it in the day of judgment.* <sup>37</sup> *For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."*

## **2. Prayer**

### **Eph. 6:17-18**

*"And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints..."*

#### **All prayer:**

- Prayer of thanksgiving
- Prayer of praise
- Prayer of consecration
- Prayer of repentance
- Prayer of forgiveness
- Prayer of supplication
- Prayer of intercession
- Prayer in the Spirit (tongues)
- Prayer of agreement (corporate prayer)
- Listening prayer
- Praying through a burden
- Prayer of binding and loosing (allowing and disallowing)
- Warfare prayer
- Praying the Word of God

#### **Supplication in the Spirit**

In most relationships, there is the friendship, or relating side of the relationship, and then depending on the nature of the relationship, there will be some part that is admin- oriented, or deal with the nitty gritty of making things happen. It is the same with God. There is our relationship with God and prayer that features here, with 2-way communication. In any work relationship, there is the business and admin side of the relationship. Our relationship with God is no different. In order to play our role

in bringing God's Kingdom, there is an element of prayer and supplication that is the business side of the relationship. It requires discipline and commitment and may not feel particularly enthralling. We may not hear and feel something every-time we fulfil this business part of the relationship. That's fine. We pray in faith and because we know its powerful and necessary and yields results.

**Rom. 8:26-28**

*Likewise, the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.*

**Phil. 4:6-7**

*Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

### **3. Praise and worship**

**2 Chron 20:1,3-4**

*It happened after this that the people of Moab with the people of Ammon, and others with them besides the Ammonites, came to battle against Jehoshaphat.*

*And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. So Judah gathered together to ask help from the Lord; and from all the cities of Judah they came to seek the Lord.*

Jehoshaphat then goes on to pray in the court in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem in the new court. The Spirit of the Lord comes upon Jahaziel in response and this is what the Lord said:

**2 Chron 20:15, 17**

*Listen, all you of Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem, and you, King Jehoshaphat! Thus says the Lord to you: Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God's.*

*You will not need to fight in this battle. Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord, who is with you, O Judah and Jerusalem!' Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, for the Lord is with you."*

## **2 Chron 20:21-22**

*And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed those who should sing to the Lord, and who should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army and were saying: "Praise the Lord, For His mercy endures forever." Now when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated.*

*Praise the Lord!*

*Sing to the Lord a new song,*

*And His praise in the assembly of saints.*

*Let Israel rejoice in their Maker;*

*Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.*

*Let them praise His name with the dance;*

*Let them sing praises to Him with the timbrel and harp.*

*For the Lord takes pleasure in His people;*

*He will beautify the humble with salvation.*

*Let the saints be joyful in glory;*

*Let them sing aloud on their beds.*

*Let the high praises of God be in their mouth,*

*And a two-edged sword in their hand,*

*To execute vengeance on the nations,*

*And punishments on the peoples;*

*To bind their kings with chains,*

*And their nobles with fetters of iron;*

*To execute on them the written judgment—*

*This honour has all His saints.*

*Praise the Lord! Ps. 149*

## **4. Forgiveness**

When Jesus instructs us to forgive and encourages us that our heavenly Father will forgive us even as we forgive others in Matthew 6, that Greek word for forgive means

- to send away
- to send forth, yield up, to expire
- to let go, let alone, let be
- to disregard

- to leave, not to discuss now
- to omit, neglect
- to let go, give up a debt, forgive, to remit
- to give up, keep no longer
- to permit, allow, not to hinder, to give up a thing to a person
- to leave, go way from one in order to go to another place
- to depart from any one
- to depart from one and leave him to himself so that all mutual claims are abandoned
- to go away leaving something behind
- to leave one by not taking him as a companion
- 3i) abandon, leave destitute

### **English definition:**

The word “forgive means “to cancel or pardon.”

To forgive is to absolve from liability to punishment for a crime or fault committed.

### **What is forgiveness not?**

Forgiveness is not:

- Saying what you did was acceptable
- Saying I will trust you fully again and not put in place requisite boundaries to protect myself
- Saying I condone your actions/attitude
- Saying I agree with what you did/said/didn't do
- Being a doormat
- Being permissive
- Being weak

### *Unlimited Forgiveness*

#### **Mt. 18:21-30**

*Later Peter approached Jesus and said, “How many times do I have to forgive my fellow believer who keeps offending me? Seven times?” Jesus answered, “Not seven times, Peter, but seventy times seven times! The lessons of forgiveness in heaven’s*

*kingdom realm can be illustrated like this: “There once was a king who had servants who had borrowed money from the royal treasury. He decided to settle accounts with each of them. As he began the process, it came to his attention that one of his servants owed him one billion dollars. So he summoned the servant before him and said to him, ‘Pay me what you owe me.’ When his servant was unable to repay his debt, the king ordered that he be sold as a slave along with his wife and children and every possession they owned as payment toward his debt. The servant threw himself facedown at his master’s feet and begged for mercy. ‘Please be patient with me. Just give me more time and I will repay you all that I owe.’ Upon hearing his pleas, the king had compassion on his servant, and released him, and forgave his entire debt. “No sooner had the servant left when he met one of his fellow servants, who owed him twenty thousand dollars He seized him by the throat and began to choke him, saying, ‘You’d better pay me right now everything you owe me!’ His fellow servant threw himself facedown at his feet and begged, ‘Please be patient with me. If you’ll just give me time, I will repay you all that is owed.’ But the one who had his debt forgiven stubbornly refused to forgive what was owed him. He had his fellow servant thrown into prison and demanded he remain there until he repaid the debt in full. “When his associates saw what was going on, they were outraged and went to the king and told him the whole story. The king said to him, ‘You scoundrel! Is this the way you respond to my mercy? Because you begged me, I forgave you the massive debt that you owed me. Why didn’t you show the same mercy to your fellow servant that I showed to you?’ In a fury of anger, the king turned him over to the prison guards to be tortured until all his debt was repaid. In this same way, my heavenly Father will deal with any of you if you do not release forgiveness from your heart toward your fellow believer.”*

Forgiveness is the voluntary release of a person over which one has legal control. We will personally suffer and dwell in a prison of our own making if we do not forgive.

This was written by a Jewish man named Simon Wiesenthal concerning some of the experiences he had during the Second World War. He has written about them in his book “The Sunflower: On the Possibilities and Limits of Forgiveness”.

Our column suddenly came to a halt at a crossroads. I could see nothing that might be holding us up but I noticed on the left of the street there was a military cemetery. It was enclosed by a low barbed wire fence. The wires were threaded through sparse bushes and low shrubs, but between them you could see the graves aligned in stiff rows. And on each grave there was planted a sunflower, as straight as a soldier on parade. I stared spellbound. The flower heads seemed to absorb the sun's rays like mirrors and draw them down into the darkness of the ground as my gaze wandered

from the sunflower to the grave. It seemed to penetrate the earth and suddenly I saw before me a periscope. It was gaily coloured and butterflies fluttered from flower to flower. Were they carrying messages from grave to grave? Were they whispering something to each flower to pass on to the soldier below? Yes, this was just what they were doing; the dead were receiving light and messages. Suddenly I envied the dead soldiers. Each had a sunflower to connect him with the living world, and butterflies to visit his grave. For me there would be no sunflower. I would be buried in a mass grave, where corpses would be piled on top of me. No sunflower would ever bring light into my darkness, and no butterflies would dance above my dreadful tomb.

Wiesenthal and his group of Jewish prisoners proceed to do work in an old Polish building that has been converted into a hospital of some sort. Arbitrarily and simply because he is a Jew, Wiesenthal was summoned into a dying German soldier's room.

The dying soldier mentions a day the German SS got to Dnepropetrovsk in Russia. He describes in detail the situation that has plagued him since then and his involvement in it. A large group of Jews, mostly women, children and the elderly were forced into a three-story house. The men among the Jews were forced to carry cans of petrol to the top floors. The house door was locked and a machine gun aimed at the door. Hand grenades were thrown through the windows and the house burst into flames.

But he (the German soldier) continued: "We heard screams and saw the flames eat their way from floor to floor... We had our rifles ready to shoot down anyone who tried to escape from that blazing hell... "The screams from the house were horrible. Dense smoke poured out and choked us..." ... "Behind the windows of the second floor, I saw a man with a small child in his arms. His clothes were alight. By his side stood a woman, doubtless the mother of the child. With his free hand the man covered the child's eyes... then he jumped into the street. Seconds later the mother followed. Then from the other windows fell burning bodies... We shot... Oh God!" The dying man held his hand in front of his bandaged eyes as if he wanted to banish the picture from his mind. "I don't know how many tried to jump out of the windows but that one family I shall never forget— least of all the child. It had black hair and dark eyes..."

"We were approaching Taganrog, which was strongly held by Russians. We lay among the hills, barely a hundred yards from them. Their artillery fire was incessant. We cowered in our trenches and tried to conquer our fear by drinking from brandy flasks passed from hand to hand. We waited for the order to attack. It came at last

and we climbed out of the trenches and charged, but suddenly I stopped as though rooted to the ground. Something seized me. My hands, which held my rifle with fixed bayonet, began to tremble. “In that moment I saw the burning family, the father with the child and behind them the mother— and they came to meet me. ‘No, I cannot shoot at them a second time.’ The thought flashed through my mind... And then a shell exploded by my side. I lost consciousness. “When I woke in hospital I knew that I had lost my eyesight. My face and the upper part of my body were torn to ribbons. The nurse told me that the surgeon had taken a whole basinful of shell splinters out of my body. It was a miracle that I was still alive— even now I am as good as dead...”

“I know that what I have told you is terrible. In the long nights while I have been waiting for death, time and time again I have longed to talk about it to a Jew and beg forgiveness from him. Only I didn't know whether there were any Jews left... “I know that what I am asking is almost too much for you, but without your answer I cannot die in peace.”

I stood up and looked in his direction, at his folded hands. Between them there seemed to rest a sunflower. At last I made up my mind and without a word I left the room.

The crux of the matter is, of course, the question of forgiveness. Forgetting is something that time alone takes care of, but forgiveness is an act of volition, and only the sufferer is qualified to make the decision. You, who have just read this sad and tragic episode in my life, can mentally change places with me and ask yourself the crucial question, “What would I have done?”

Wiesenthal, Simon. *The Sunflower: On the Possibilities and Limits of Forgiveness* (p. 100). Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

### **What would you have done?**

We dare not judge Wiesenthal. Who can possibly know the road that he walked seeing so many family members and loved ones, friends mistreated, tortured and murdered at the hands of the Germans, even his own experiences in the concentration camp. Yet his question is valid for all of us. What will you do? What are you choosing?

You see we all have experienced injustices. We can all recount being hurt, misjudged, treated unfairly, intentionally mistreated or even betrayed by family members, authority figures, close friends, acquaintances, work colleagues, business

partners, and so forth. There is no person immune to this choice. We will all have to make the decision, to forgive, or not. Jesus once said to his disciples,

**Lk. 17:1**

*"It is impossible that no offenses should come, but woe to him through whom they do come!"*

They will come. What will you choose? They have come. What have you chosen?

I want to look at another account. Where a man experienced much injustice, misunderstanding, envy, betrayal, false accusation, hatred, and mockery. He tasted torture and pain and death at the hands of his accusers. We will see what He chose.

I will pick up his experience in a garden late at night. This man had been in prayer for a period when someone whom he had walked with for a no of years arrived leading a crowd armed with swords and clubs sent from the respected religious authorities and elders. They arrived to falsely accuse and arrest Him.

- He had been in prayer. He was doing the will of God. With pure motives. He had done nothing wrong.
- A "friend" led the crowd that came against Him.
- The crowd came with swords and clubs – Jesus never desired to fight
- The crowd was sent from the respected religious leaders. From the authorities of the day. The authorities wanted to arrest him at night. They feared the crowds would riot if they did it in the day (Mk. 14:1-2).

You must have guessed who this man was? Jesus.

Upon His arrest on a Thursday night, He was taken to Annas' home. Annas was not the current high priest, his son-in-law Caiaphas was. However, Annas held the real power. This was an illegal court gathering.

He was then taken before the Sanhedrin (religious leaders) in Caiaphas' palace between midnight and dawn for another illegal inquisition. The authorities were looking for false evidence against Jesus. They even rounded up a string of false witnesses and listened to their false testimony. After coaxing what they misinterpreted as a blasphemous confession out of Jesus, they condemned him as worthy of death. Only, they did not have the authority to pass a death sentence, and so they needed a Roman court to do so. But before they could do this, they needed to ratify their condemnation in daylight.

You see, Jesus' first 2 trials were conducted under the cover of darkness. Jewish law quite plainly required that trials be conducted during the day. The chief priests and elders of the people organized a brief trial to take place during the day simply to reaffirm and legitimize the decisions that had already been made. The hate of the religious leaders for Jesus meant that they even violated their own rules of legal procedure to ensure Jesus' condemnation.

After these 3 religious trials, the first 2 being invalid and illegal, the third being a bogus trial, Jesus then faced 3 Roman trials. This was all because the religious authorities did not have the power to sentence Jesus to death, only the Roman authorities could. But the religious authorities wanted to ensure he would die.

In the religious trials, the accusations were religious in nature, particularly blasphemy. However, the Jewish leaders knew that this would not interest a Roman court. They therefore tried to portray Him as a rebel claiming to be king and inciting the people to rebel against Rome.

Jesus first Roman trial was before Pilate, who was governor of Judea. His second trial was before Herod who was the ruler of Galilee. Herod knew about Jesus' reputation as a miracle-worker and wanted Jesus to cooperate and entertain him. When Jesus wouldn't comply with his demands, Herod mocked him and sent him back to Pilate.

Jesus found himself back before Pilate again for his third and final Roman trial. Pilate knew that Jesus was innocent but felt the pressure that the Jews were putting on him. He was afraid that the Jews would riot if he didn't do their bidding, and as it was Passover, the Jewish population in Jerusalem had swelled by a few hundred thousand. Even though Pilate knew Jesus was innocent, even though he knew the Jewish authorities were jealous of Jesus, even though his wife warned him against it, he washed his hands of the situation and allowed an innocent man to be murdered because of false accusation.

Jesus suffered humiliation, mockery, torturous beatings and pain on his way to the crucifixion. At the crucifixion, abandonment looked on,- the only one of his 12 disciples whom he had poured his life into for the past few years who was anywhere near was John. Resentment looked on. Pride looked on. Mockery looked on. Malicious intent laughed. Misunderstanding looked on, triumphantly, with false accusation and envy and hatred. Jesus had many opportunities to harbour unforgiveness, resentment and bitterness. But what did He choose? The first of his last seven statements from the cross before He died was,

### **Lk. 23:34**

*“Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.”*

This is an extremely challenging example He left us.

“To forgive is to set a prisoner free and discover that the prisoner was you”. Lewis.  
B. Smedes

Forgiveness is a key which Jesus holds out to us. It's a key that unlocks our own prison gates. Unfortunately, unforgiveness blinds, and often it blinds us to our own imprisoned status. Forgiveness is a weapon of warfare. It's a weapon we are to use over our own hearts and lives. Failure to do so has multiple consequences. We can hold unforgiveness toward ourselves, others, or towards God. Unforgiveness often leads to bitterness and offense when it is not given. Unforgiveness is a place of pride and self-righteousness. If this is not dealt with, it becomes a spiritually barren place, devoid of life.

**“I never knew how strong I was until I had to forgive someone who wasn't sorry and accept an apology I ever received”**

### **Conclusion**

There are many weapons that we have been given to use in life. Some of them I have mentioned today:

- The Word of God
- Prayer
- Praise and Worship
- Forgiveness

Regular and practised use of these throughout our lives is important. This is especially critical in the in-between time when we are waiting and warring for the manifestation and fulfilment of God's promises over our lives.

## References

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