

CAUGHT “RED-HANDED” FORGIVENESS OF SINS

So what exactly does being caught “red-handed” mean? According to a search on the Internet, being caught “red-handed” dates back to the Scottish in the 15th century. It literally means to have been caught with blood on one’s hands. Today, it’s used for more general terms, referring to a person getting caught in the act of doing something wrong. Now, let’s all be honest here. How many of us have ever got caught doing something we knew that we shouldn’t be doing? For instance, your mom tells you not to be eating before supper and right when you put that cookie in your mouth, she walks in. Or how about the time your parents told you not to get anything on your church clothes and you fell and got mud on the knees? What did you do? You immediately tried to wipe it off with water and a wash cloth only to find out that you had made it so much worse.

And don’t you remember how it felt when your parents finally found out about what you did - hearing your name called in that not-so-nice tone and knowing in your heart that you were caught? The butterflies filled your stomach as you took the walk towards their voice. You just knew it was over for you, grounded for life, never able to socialize again. And what happened? Your parents told you that what you did was wrong and you knew in your heart that it was, too. Yes, you did get into trouble, but then your parents forgave you and moved on. Aren’t we glad that our parents and other authority figures do not hold every little mistake against us in life?

Jesus Christ knew every sin that we had committed, yet He still chose to die to cleanse us. As soon as we ask for forgiveness, our sins are forgiven and forgotten. God puts our sins in the Sea of Forgiveness and puts up a sign that says, “No Fishing in These Waters.” He forgives our sins and does not remember them any more. Even when your parents sometimes say, “Remember when you did such and such and you got into so much trouble,” God forgives our sins through the cleansing of His Son’s blood and forgets them. We are so blessed to have a Heavenly Father who does not hold our past mistakes and regrets against us. As Christ forgives us, so we are to forgive others. We are to love others and forgive them for the actions against us. Not only are we to forgive them, but then we are to forget the problems. All of us need forgiveness at some point or another in our lives and we should be Christ-like as we forgive others.

In this story, a woman was caught in the act of adultery and brought in by the scribes and the Pharisees to try to trap Jesus. The Pharisees were hoping to put Jesus in a serious predicament by making Him choose between the Law of Moses and the love for sinners. Jesus, being all knowing and all powerful, turned the situation around for the good of the woman.

THE SINNER

We do not know much about this woman. We don't know her age or even what her name is. All we do know is that this woman was a sinner, caught in the act of adultery. The Pharisees brought the woman to Jesus in front of the crowd He was teaching at the temple. Not only did they bring her into the crowd, but they made her stand in the center, a spectacle for all to see. The Pharisees did not necessarily choose this woman because of her sin, but rather because they wanted to use her as a way to trap Jesus. The Pharisees referred to the Law of Moses and how it commanded that people caught in the act of adultery should be put to death. This was correct as seen in Leviticus 20:10 and Deuteronomy 22:22. However, where was the man involved in this situation? The Pharisees had already disregarded the law by not bringing the man into the situation. Jesus knew this woman was a sinner and yet He loved her still. These Pharisees did not care anything about this woman or her embarrassment, but were simply trying to use her situation. We are all sinners. All of us have messed up at some point in our lives or another. Jesus Christ still looks at us in love, hoping that we will turn from our sins and turn to Him. He does not want to embarrass or hurt us, but wants us to be forgiven and to turn from our wicked ways.

THE SINLESS

Jesus knew that the Pharisees had brought this woman before Him in the temple to trap Him. After the Pharisees had asked Him what they were to do with this lady caught in the act of adultery, Jesus stooped down and began to write in the dirt. Many people have wondered what Jesus wrote as He moved His hand on the ground. Some believe He was writing the sins of the Pharisees; others believe He was writing the other commandments. Whatever it is that Jesus wrote, it really made a difference in the attitude of the Pharisees. Jesus did comply with the Law of Moses as He told them to stone her, but He said whoever is without sin should cast the first stone. Jesus agreed with the Old Testament law, but the change that He brought through the new covenant included love. Yes, sin does have consequences, but through Christ's love, we now can experience the forgiveness of our sins. After Jesus spoke, the Pharisees began to leave one by one, oldest to youngest. Do you think perhaps the oldest left first because they realized they were sinners, too, and had lived a life of sin just as this adulterous woman had? The only person that was left with the adulterous woman was Jesus Christ, the one person who had no sin. This woman had been spared through the mercy of a loving Savior.

THE SAVED

The adulterous woman had been saved from the wrath of the Pharisees by the mercy and love of Jesus Christ. After the Pharisees had left, Jesus asked the woman, who was left to condemn her, and no one but He was left. Jesus told her that He did not condemn her and to go her way and sin no more. Jesus did not condemn her sin, but He did not ignore that she had sin in her life, either. God is full of forgiveness. However, once we ask Him for forgiveness, we are to be like the adulterous woman and sin no more. Once we repent of our sin and accept God's forgiveness in our lives, we are to turn from our immorality and

change our ways. God has saved us from condemnation, but it is our job to turn 180 degrees from our immorality. Our desire should be to never purposefully commit that sin again.

It is a great thought to believe that Jesus Christ forgives us of our sins and does not remember them again. Our God forgives us and then urges us to sin no more.

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