

Face Slap (Sin) (Forgiveness)

Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight; so you are right in your verdict and justified when you judge. Psalm 51:4

The Basic Bible Truth

We must understand that God takes our sin personally. He holds us in the highest standard in regards to sin. David said that our failure to do right is always directed at God. It is His laws that we bend and break, and therefore, it is Him that we offend.

The Object

Someone From The Audience

This object lesson is unique. I typically have my wife present for this. I will pick a volunteer, usually a girl, and tell her to do whatever my wife tells her to do. Meanwhile I simply sit on a stool in the front of the room, saying nothing. My wife has been instructed to whisper to the volunteer to slap me across the face on the cheek. Almost always they are very unsure about doing it and my wife will urge them on. And almost always the slap is light. I simply respond with a smile and "I forgive you". My wife tells them to do it again, but harder. My response is identical each time. The volunteer goes back to my wife again and again, each time they are told to slap me harder and harder, and each time my response is "I forgive you". Gradually, the volunteer builds up a tolerance for this odd behavior and the slaps will become genuinely painful, leaving me with red cheeks and very real pain. I have had volunteers quit before I tell them to, with tears in their eyes, wanting no more of this. Other times, they relish the idea of getting to do this and I have to be prepared to take a very real hit across the face. Either way, it works for the lesson.

The Lesson

David recognized a very important fact concerning sin: our sin is directed at God first and foremost. Yes, our sin may affect others around us as well, but it is God who created the rule or law to begin with. It is His standard that we are ignoring when we do wrong. And He takes it personally. When we tolerate sin in our lives it is a great affront to our God. He reminds us that the wrong that we do is very serious.

Early in our country's history, the leaders in our federal government recognized the need for reliable communication in our new country. They established the United States Postal system. It was now possible to write letters and have them arrive at the address on the envelope. They ensured the reliability of the entire apparatus by placing a huge penalty on anyone who robbed the mail or hurt a postal employee. If found guilty, a perpetrator was hung by the neck until dead. The result was that there were few robberies of those delivering the mail in those early days. The potential reward for the thief was not worth the risk of life. Our sin is, likewise, not worth the risk.

For those of us who are Christians, who have been born again, the death penalty is off of the table. Jesus has paid the price for our sin with His own death. But that does not allow for us to live as we please and have no consequences. Sin can and will be forgiven if we ask. Consequences may not be. Our attitude to God should be a reverential awe of the price that He willingly paid for our forgiveness, and the result of that heart felt realization should be that we avoid sin. Our sin is directed at God. It is His law that we

have chosen to go around. And it must sadden Him greatly when we choose to go our own way, in spite of His great generosity towards us.

In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve were given a command by God not to eat of a certain tree. They disobeyed and immediately understood that they had done wrong. We are created in the image of God and because of Adam and Eve's mistake, we now know about good and evil. We have an almost intuitive knowledge of right and wrong. It is called a sin nature and it revels in doing wrong. Doing right does not come naturally to us.

Being created in the image of God means that we are a reflection of God to the world. Sin smudges that mirror and mars the likeness. When we sin we diminish the beauty and holiness we were designed to model and reflect. We no longer are a valid representation of the glory of God. We were created solely for His glory. That is our primary reason for existence. We are not here for anything that we can accomplish or add to God that He doesn't already have. We are to be a mirror of God's character and glory and when we fail to do that, we are an offense to Him personally and directly.

To see sin as a slap in the face to God is theologically quite accurate. May we consider that next time we are tempted to do wrong.

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