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Forgiveness



You can quite rightly ask what these two images have to do with each other.

I will explain, it is about forgiveness, but before I write more let me first describe the sorry state we are all in.



Earlier this year (2020) Harry Miller won his case in Court that the Police cannot have convicted him of a **non-crime** (which is what the Court agreed the alleged “Hate crime” was in his case), and then the Police cannot leave his name on a register permanently with no appeal. Such a register can find his name on it and then lead to offers of employment, and so on, being withdrawn. This is permanent lifelong punishment for a non-crime.

This is clearly, and thoroughly against “British-values”. Even if it weren't “British values” it is completely unjust.

Then this week (March 2020) news came out that Woody Allen's memoirs have been delayed due to the claims of hurting his daughter back in 1992, claims that have never been proved and he has always denied. I do NOT comment on whether or not such claims are true or false – That is not the point, it all reveals instead just how unforgiving the secular world now is. This event is almost 30 years ago and there is simply no stopping the secular world dredging the claim up again, and again and again, irrespective of whether it is true or false. It is never-ending.

I know from personal experience that just because mainstream media says it, doesn't make it true. When my younger brother was killed in Libya it was national news and printed in newspapers and even appearing daily on radio and television.

The police had finally found me and called me on the mobile phone at 2 in the morning because I was away from home. I had heard in the evening on the news that a British teacher had been killed in Libya. My younger brother wasn't a teacher.

I told my eldest son that it was his uncle but I was so emotionally overcome by that phone call to him that, to my shame, I couldn't bring myself to call my youngest son that day.

The news then said a British oil worker had been killed, but my younger brother wasn't an oil worker. One main-stream national newspaper even published that an Oil-chief had been killed in Libya— but since my younger brother wasn't an oil worker he certainly wasn't an oil-chief. He was actually in Libya to install steam turbines for Tripoli to try to give them more stable electricity supplies. The real irony here is that the Local small newspaper to the town in which he had grown up was the only one to actually print the truth. The truth wasn't easy but I found the truth to be much, much easier to hear than the absolute lies in mainstream media. I had also discovered how often the mainstream media copy each other with the false idea that if another paper had said it then it might be true (when it isn't).

Handling what is wrong is NOT easy, and wherever the fault lies you need to find a way to move on and forgiveness is a really, really important part of that process. Forgiveness is never saying that what happened was ever right at all. It is, however forgiving those involved and not even always getting to the truth of what actually happened.

St Paul wrote, in the letter to the Romans at chapter 7 at verse 21, that he wanted to do good but kept on getting things wrong:

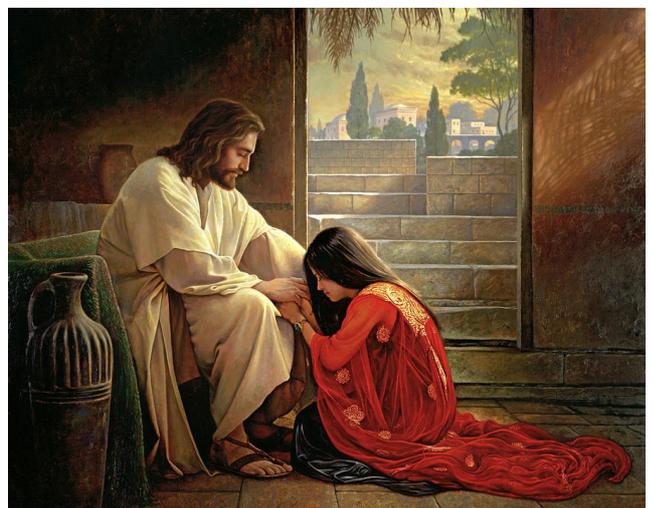
²¹ So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. ²² For in my inner being I delight in God's law; ²³ but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. ²⁴ What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? ²⁵ Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!

So if even St Paul who is a really good person and a Saint keeps getting it wrong then who are we to suggest we are better than St Paul ? If even St Paul constantly needs the forgiveness given by Jesus Christ then so does every one of us. This means that all of us need to constantly repent of the wrong we do and receive the forgiveness that Jesus Christ freely gives to every one of us. What matters is the recognition that we are imperfect and realising the value of forgiveness in Jesus Christ.

So when I wrote above, "*The truth wasn't easy but I found the truth to be much, much easier to hear than the absolute lies in mainstream media...*" I am not saying that any of us at all are so perfect that the truth is always nice. Not at all, but the truth is honest and that truth is easier to handle in our lives than others lying about a person.

Greg Olsen wrote in 2004:

The prophet Isaiah gave hope and comfort to all who have stumbled and made mistakes when he revealed these words from the Lord: "...Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." (Isaiah 1:18)



With a broken heart and a contrite spirit, we can receive forgiveness and learn from our mistakes. Part of what we may learn in the process is that happiness comes not only from receiving forgiveness, but also from extending it!

It was Greg Olsen who made the picture above.

Forgiveness is available to anyone who believes in Jesus Christ, indeed Christianity is about forgiveness of what we do wrong.

In the Christian view we are all created equal and we care for others and welcome others including strangers and foreigners. Christians do, however, expect people to become better (to constantly change for the better). We are not perfect people and do not always get everything right. That is what makes Christianity so accessible to everyone because it offers forgiveness for getting things wrong. In fact it offers anyone forgiveness no matter who they are and all it takes is belief in Jesus Christ.

Right at the very beginning of the Bible in Genesis chapter 1 at verse 27 we are told:

*So God created mankind in his own image,
in the image of God He created them;
male and female He created them.*

That fundamental concept, that we are all created in God's image, is then used throughout the Bible. If we are all created in God's image then we are all equal and all equally valuable.

God's caring love for us isn't just in the New Testament but even right at the beginning in creation have you ever noticed that when God has to expel Adam and Eve from out of the Garden of Eden it is then that God gives them each a coat to keep them warm? That is how much God cares for each of us – God cares for us, all of us, always.

So what do the two pictures at the beginning have to do with each other?

The image on the Medical Corps badge comes from the Bible. In Numbers chapter 21 we are told:

⁸ The Lord said to Moses, "Make a snake and put it up on a pole; anyone who is bitten can look at it and live."⁹ So Moses made a bronze snake and put it up on a pole. Then when anyone was bitten by a snake and looked at the bronze snake, they lived.

It is a story of healing but also the preceding verses show us that it is also part of God's judgement. So God's righteousness cannot allow evil and yet at the same time God also



provides healing for anyone if they simply looked upon the image of the snake (representing their wrong-doing) raised up (representing their healing that would come about).

In John gospel at Chapter 3 Jesus relates that same event to his own raising up. As it says in John's gospel:

¹⁶ For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

So God's righteousness cannot allow evil and yet at the same time God also provides healing for anyone if they simply looked upon the image of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ (representing their wrong-doing) raised up (representing their healing). So it is that the resurrection happened on the third day to prove the forgiveness and healing available to each one of us. There is no small print or complications: All that any of us has to do is to believe completely in Jesus Christ.

The forgiveness also asks for our repentance, yet that forgiveness is available to each of us. As St Paul wrote in the letter to the Romans at Chapter 7:

²⁴ What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? ²⁵ Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!

Any of us can receive forgiveness from God through our Saviour Jesus Christ – all we have to do is believe in him completely. “.... ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world....”

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