



CALVARY MONUMENT BIBLE CHURCH
LOVING, LIVING, LEADING FOR GOD'S GLORY

GOD OF GRACE NOT AMNESIA

Pastor Bob Reid | July 1, 2020

Oliver Cromwell supposedly told his portrait painter to depict him “warts and all,” rather than in a flattering manner typical of his time. He had a very visible physical wart as well as many political and ethical ones. He was an English general and statesman who led armies against King Charles I in the English Civil War and oversaw brutal military campaigns. He is even charged with genocide by some. Historians have divided opinions about him that range from a military dictator to a hero of liberty. He is criticized in Ireland and celebrated as one of the ten greatest Britons of all time in a 2002 BBC poll. It appears when investigating people closely it often reveals their “warts” – like it or not. Dishonesty does not disguise anyone’s warts.

The Bible is an accurate and honest history. One person said, “One of the things that powerfully authenticates the veracity of scripture is its willingness to present God’s people, warts and all. The Bible doesn’t try to hide the flaws of its characters, even its heroes.” Think of the “warts” revealed in the lives of Bible heroes like Noah (a drunkard), Abraham (a doubter), Jacob (a deceiver), David (an adulterer), Solomon (a womanizer), and Peter (a denier). The Bible transparently reveals lots of “warts” even among those that God chose to use. I love what Ray Noah observes, “The Bible doesn’t hide human flaws – it redeems them.” That is part of God’s amazing grace.

King David had known the thrill of victory in his life and the agony of defeat. He had been elevated by God to a place of prominence as king of Israel. He also descended into the depths of sin by becoming an adulterer and a murderer. In Psalm 51 he cries out to God after he was confronted by Nathan the Prophet, “Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin” (1-2). “Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me” (10-12). He saw his “wart” of sin, and asked God to purge it from his life – “Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow” (7).

Knowing the character of God, David was comforted. He rejoiced that, “The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; he does not treat us as our sins

deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us” (Psalm 103:8-12).

The prophet Isaiah picks up a similar theme speaking about unfaithful and sinful Israel, God’s chosen people. He writes, “I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more” (Isaiah 43:25). Was he saying that God develops amnesia when it comes to our sin once we have confessed it and been cleansed by the blood of Christ? One writer observes,

“God’s ‘not remembering’ is not what we usually think of as forgetfulness. God is omniscient. He knows everything, and He forgets nothing. However, He can choose not to remember something. In human relationships, we can choose to remember the offenses someone has committed against us, or we can choose to forget. To forgive someone, we must often put painful memories out of our minds. We don’t actually forget the sin, and it’s not that we are unable to recall the offense, but we choose to overlook it. Forgiveness prevents us from dwelling on past troubles” (gotquestions.org).

Corrie ten Boom demonstrates God-like forgiveness that is available to every child of God. Because she and her family harbored Jews in Netherlands from the Nazis, she and her family were arrested. Corrie and her sister were placed in the notorious Ravensbrück concentration camp where her sister Bessie eventually died. God gave Corrie the gift of God-like forgiveness. She concluded, “Forgiveness is the key that unlocks the door of resentment and the handcuffs of hatred. It is a power that breaks the chains of bitterness and the shackles of selfishness.” As a result, she was given a worldwide ministry of reconciliation in this broken and hate filled world.

God has forgiven and chooses to not remember our “warts” of sin. Can we do the same toward others? Paul admonished Christians, “Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.” (Ephesians 4:31-32). Such an attitude would really change the narrative of our current history. Let’s not focus on other’s warts. Remember, we all have our warts!