

The Bad News of Ignoring the Good News

I didn't intend to do it. I went out to unload groceries from the trunk of our new car. The car was parked in the garage, with many garden tools hanging by hooks on the wall. Carrying two armloads of groceries, I accidentally stepped on the bristles of a push broom that was leaning against the wall. The handle of the broom came forward and pulled a metal yard rake off the wall, striking the side of our new car. The prongs of the rake put several small scratches on the door of the car. Looking at the minor damage, it was my hope that the scratches could be rubbed out. I planned to ask the dealership about it the next time I took the car in for servicing. So, I didn't acknowledge the accident to Kathy. I wanted to correct the problem myself and not admit what happened.



That approach sounds reasonable. Unfortunately, I was unaware of a small dent and chipped paint where the rake first hit the car. It was at the top edge of the door, a couple feet higher than the minor scratches I had seen earlier. My plan of hoping the problem would just go away with minor rubbing out was no longer a possibility. To make it worse, it was Kathy who discovered the more major damage.

We often think that our transgressions are minor, hoping they just go away on their own, or we can correct them, undetected by others. We think things are not a big deal and don't affect anyone else.

I had one more chance to get away scot free. After seeing the damage Kathy speculated that someone must have dropped something on our car in a parking lot. I froze. If I kept my mouth shut an anonymous person would be blamed for the damage to the car. To my own discredit, I did keep quiet about what happened. My guilt ate away at me for a few days until Kathy made the same comment again. It was time to come clean.

The Bible tells us: *Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy (Proverbs 28:13)*. I needed mercy.

My confession is not something to brag about. On the contrary, the delayed timing compounded my guilt. Hiding my involvement was a sin. We are separated – alienated from God – by our sins. While I could have deceived Kathy, God knew what I had done. I needed to be reconciled with God. For me, to continue living without acknowledging my sin would be a step towards eternal separation from God.

The Christian writer Ravi Zacharias calls this “the bad news of ignoring the Good News.” Jesus offers us forgiveness if we admit our faults and try to amend our lives. In failing to acknowledge my sin I would alienate myself from God. Jesus offers the Good News. God doesn't just rub out our sins. Thanks to the resurrection God makes us totally new again. We can be right with God. *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9)*.

Think back to the events of Holy week. In fear of His life, Peter denied Jesus three times. In a way, I did the same. The initial damage to the car was an accident, and not a sin. My first sin was trying to avoid accepting responsibility. Secondly, I tried to justify what happened by implying I was just doing a family chore – bringing in the groceries from the car. The third sin was allowing someone else, an anonymous person, to take the blame. How convenient it was for Kathy to assume it happened in a parking lot by some unknown stranger! I could have been off the hook by pretending to live a lie. What I overlooked was the fact that sins are not just between me and the people in my life. I was sinning against God.

There are human consequences for my sin. Even if I didn't admit fault, I would still have the repair costs, so that isn't a consequence. The human consequence is the potential damage to trust and not giving Kathy a chance to

forgive. But, there is an even greater consequence -- the spiritual consequence of a more distant relationship with God. Jesus is waiting for us to confess our sins so that He can forgive. Not asking for forgiveness is ignoring the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Questions for Personal Reflection: What sins have you not yet confessed to God? When will you get right with God?

Scripture: *If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land (2 Chronicles 7:14).*

Prayer: Most Heavenly Father. We know we are sinful. Sometimes we avoid admitting our faults with others and to You. You teach us to be truthful with each other and to confess our sins, so that we can receive forgiveness. Amen.